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LOCATING THE PLACE AND MEANING OF THE *TALUD-TABLERO* ARCHITECTURAL STYLE IN THE EARLY CLASSIC MAYA BUILT ENVIRONMENT

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LOCATING THE PLACE AND MEANING OF THE *TALUD-TABLERO* ARCHITECTURAL STYLE IN THE EARLY CLASSIC MAYA BUILT ENVIRONMENT

by

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LOCATING THE PLACE AND MEANING OF THE *TALUD-TABLERO* ARCHITECTURAL STYLE IN THE EARLY CLASSIC MAYA BUILT ENVIRONMENT

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This dissertation defines the place and meaning of the *talud-tablero* architectural style within the context of the Early Classic built environment. In doing so, this study explores the relationship between architectural style and changing perceptions of key spaces within the sacred landscape, particularly those places associated with primordial origins. Theoretically, the dissertation presents a model for "reading" architectural style in order to understand the unique role of style as a carrier of collective memory. I argue that Maya rulers were keenly aware of the power of architectural style to evoke specific spatial and experiential associations in the viewer that reinforced their claims to power.

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INTRODUCTION

A perpetual discussion within Mesoamerican studies revolves around the nature of the social, political and cultural interaction between Central Mexico, in particular the city of Teotihuacán, and the Maya Lowlands during the Classic period (250-909 AD) [Map 1]. The presence of Mexican-style objects and architecture as well as iconography at several Maya sites strongly suggests extensive contact between the two regions. However, scholars remain divided on the nature of the interaction and its influence on artistic production. There are multiple interpretations of the problem, but theories can essentially be broken down into two schools of thought, what David Stuart has called the "externalist" and "internalist" models (Stuart 2000:165-466). Externalist interpretations suggest a disruptive and perhaps controlling Mexican presence in the Maya Lowlands during the Early Classic period (250-550 AD). Scholars in this camp argue that the appearance of Mexican-style objects during this period is evidence of Teotihuacán's direct influence on and/or political control over Maya rulers (Coggins 1975, 1979a, 1983a; Proskouriakoff 1993, Stuart 2000). Scholars following the internalist model have held the position that the presence of Mexican-style objects in the Maya area represents and more indirect relationship between the two regions. They argue that the introduction of Mexican-style art and architecture represents a local Maya appropriation of a foreign style and symbols for their associated ideology, particularly surrounding the concepts and practice of warfare (Berlo 1983; Stone 1989; Schele and Freidel 1990; Demarest and Foias 1993; Stuart 2000; Taube 2000). At the center of the

debate lies the question of whether Mexican-style art and architecture entered into the corpus of Maya art through a process of active appropriation or passive reception either through force or diffusion.

Previous efforts to resolve this debate have focused on archaeological evidence, economic theory and historical information derived from the epigraphic and iconographic records. This dissertation will approach the question from an art historical perspective. The overall focus is on the methodological and theoretical problems surrounding the study of style as a category of analysis. This study attempts to understand Maya conceptions of style and why rulers valued style as a vehicle of visual expression and a carrier of collective memory. My analysis takes a comprehensive approach to architectural style through a consideration of both continuity and change in patterns of composition in relation to the spatial, temporal and experiential context of individual structures and larger complexes. Architectural innovation is always assessed in relation to the retention of local stylistic conventions, strategies of representation and the supporting belief systems that give architecture meaning. The study of architectural style reveals significant information about how Maya rulers and their audience experienced certain spaces in the built environment. Patterns in the composition and context of *talud-tablero* within the greater civic landscape discussed in this study furthers our understanding of the intersection between Maya and Mexican culture and the role of sacred space in the establishment of dynastic power in the Early Classic.

Chapter One presents a brief summary of archaeological, art historical and

epigraphic investigations into the nature of Mexican/Maya interaction with particular attention to previous approaches to style. Chapter Two establishes the theoretical and methodological framework for the remainder of the dissertation. The first half of the chapter looks at style as a category of analysis through historiography and offers suggestions toward a comprehensive approach to style. The latter half discusses the role of architecture in the Maya built environment, the unique problems surrounding the study of architectural style and the theoretical goals of the dissertation. Chapter Three outlines the distribution of *talud-tablero* stylistic qualities at selected sites in the Maya Lowlands within the context of the development of the built environment as a whole.[1] Chapter Four concludes with an interpretation of the symbolic meanings of the *talud-tablero* style and the reasons for its appearance within the built environment. The final chapter is devoted to understanding the relationship between architectural style and the experience of space, particularly those locations within the built environment that reinforced the political power of the intrusive dynasties of the Early Classic period.

All of the sites investigated have ceramic forms, textual references and/or iconography that strongly suggest a relationship with Central Mexico. However, *talud-tablero* architecture is relatively rare within the greater context of the urban landscape and does not appear at every site. This study examines the apparent selectivity behind the appearance of *talud-tablero* architecture at both individual sites and in the Maya region as a whole. On a theoretical level, I hope to determine whether or not it is

[1] *Talud-tablero* is basically defined as an architectural form consisting of a single short *talud* with an overhanging *tablero* decorated by a thin sculpted frame [see Fig. 9a].

plausible to use architectural stylistic analysis as a measure of interaction. In particular, I question whether variation in the use of *talud-tablero* reflects external control over artistic production or internal selectivity in appropriation. I will argue that Maya rulers were keenly aware of the power of the *talud-tablero* architectural style to evoke associations with specific sacred spaces located in distant landscapes. Specifically, I assert that the appropriation of *talud-tablero* stylistic features into the local landscape was intended to manipulate collective memory concerning the place of origin of newly established dynastic lines. Furthermore, I contend that the use of *talud-tablero* architecture was part of a strategy of representation that made visible the connection between certain Maya rulers, the built environment and the supernatural powers embodied in local and distant spaces that ensured their claims to power.

As a control measure, research is restricted to the architecture of sites located in a portion of the Lowland Maya region, specifically the Peten region of Guatemala and Western Honduras [Map 2]. The Lowland area contains a relatively small percentage of well-excavated sites and even fewer with material dating to the Early Classic. Sites with long construction histories and numerous texts and images are most informative in any investigation of issues of stylistic change and artistic intention. Therefore, this study will focus on the sites of Tikal, Uaxactun, Rio Azul and Copan, four sites with long histories of excavation and a range of architectural and material findings that date from the Late Preclassic (400 BC-250 AD), Early Classic (250-550 AD) and Late Classic (550-909 AD) periods. All of these sites contain architectural features and/or material

remains that are Mexican either in their form, style or symbolism, making them the most frequently cited cities in the study of Mexican/Maya interaction. This study considers patterns in the use of *talud-tablero* at both individual sites and across the Maya area in order to understand both local and regional factors that inform the place and meaning of *talud-tablero* in the Maya built environment.

CHAPTER ONE
A Brief Summary of Research on Mexican/Maya Interaction and Approaches to Style

This chapter presents a representative history of archaeological, art historical and epigraphic investigations and interpretations of Mexican/Maya interaction. Due to the enormous amount of literature on the topic, this chapter presents the projects and ideas having the most significance for my own work on the place and meaning of *talud-tablero* architecture in the Maya region. A detailed presentation of the archaeological findings of these investigations follows in Chapter Three. This chapter focuses on the methodology and theory behind these earlier interpretations, in particular definitions of style and the application of stylistic analysis in the construction of models of interaction and cultural change.

Archaeological Investigations

Carnegie Institution of Washington Investigations at Uaxactun and Kaminaljuyu

Scholarly investigation into the nature of interaction between Central Mexico and the Maya began in the early part of the twentieth century. Excavations at a variety of sites uncovered a few examples of what investigators called “problematic” or “foreign” ceramics, sculpture and architecture that were distinctly non-Maya in their form, style and/or subject matter. Archaeologists sponsored by the Carnegie Institution of Washington were the first to record the discovery of such material at the Maya site of Uaxactun, Guatemala [Map 2]. Active during the 1930s, these early excavations

unearthed the first examples of Mexican Thin Orange ceramics found at a Maya site. Archaeologists found the ceramics in burial contexts alongside other "foreign goods" such as green obsidian from Central Mexico, Belizean volcanic rock, Honduran marble, salt from the Yucatan and cacao from the Pacific Coast. The excavation reports, written by project director A. Ledyard Smith, did not single out Mexican ceramic forms and concluded that, like the other foreign goods, the ceramics must have been included in the burial for their value as exotic, imported objects (A.L. Smith 1950:12; R. Smith 1955).[2] Smith noted the presence of Mexican ceramic forms and green obsidian at Uaxactun, but made no effort to establish any meaning beyond an implied peaceful trade relationship between the Maya region and the Central Mexican capitol.

Between 1936 and 1942, Carnegie archaeologists, Alfred Kidder, Jesse Jennings and Edwin Shook, oversaw excavations at the Highland Maya city of Kaminaljuyu,

[2] Throughout this dissertation I am careful not to confuse form with style as the two terms and their meanings are often conflated, misused or arbitrarily substituted for each other. Many scholars have used the term "Mexican-style" to describe ceramics, iconography, and architecture that have any amount of Mexican features without consideration of the nature of the features (formal, iconographic, stylistic, etc.) More often than not these forms and symbols appear in conjunction with traditional Maya artistic features, making it problematic to truly label the object "Mexican-style". In order to remedy this problem, I use "Mexican ceramic forms" to describe cylinder tripods, ring-stand bowls and other ceramic types that may or may not have been produced in Central Mexico. In terms of architecture, there are few examples of pure Mexican-style *talud-tablero* architecture in the Maya region. Elements of the style appear individually and collectively and always in association with conventional Maya architectural features. Therefore, I do not label Maya structures that display *talud-tablero* elements as "Mexican-style architecture". Distinguishing form and symbols from style removes assumptions that all objects or structures that exhibit individual stylistic elements with Mexican associations must be imported or produced by Mexican artisans or draw a one to one correlation with the art and architecture of Teotihuacán.

Guatemala [Map 2]. The project focused on the excavation of two large pyramids (Mounds A and B) located in the extreme southeastern sector of the site [Map 7, Fig. 1]. Both mounds dated to the Esperanza Phase (250-600 AD) and contained several previous constructions and elite burials.[3] Excavations of the mounds and their tombs uncovered several examples of Mexican ceramic forms and a version of *talud-tablero* architecture [Figs. 2,3].[4] At this time, scholars had not established a chronology for Teotihuacán or proposed a model of the city's interaction with the Maya. The presence of what were interpreted as Mexican-style objects and architecture suggested that the two sites were contemporary and may have had a stronger connection beyond a passive trade relationship.

The primary goals of the Carnegie project were to establish a chronology for the site and determine the ethnic identity of the builders of Mounds A and B [Table 1]. In

[3] It was not until recent times that Esperanza Phase Kaminaljuyu could be dated with any certainty. One of the objectives of the Carnegie project was the establishment of a reliable chronology for Kaminaljuyu. The presence of *talud-tablero* architecture and objects at Kaminaljuyu strongly suggested the city was a contemporary of Teotihuacán. As a result, scholars reassessed the chronology of Kaminaljuyu and pushed its florescence back to the Late Preclassic or Early Classic period. Interestingly, this new chronology placed the peak of power at Kaminaljuyu in line with the peak of power of Teotihuacán, possibly in an effort to raise the status of the then unknown city (Kidder, Jennings and Shook 1946:251).

[4] Kidder, et al. suggested that almost every element of Teotihuacán architecture was duplicated on Kaminaljuyu Mounds A and B, including: a *piedrin* (crushed stone and lime) coating on the facade, sloping *taluds* and frame-style *taluds* (Kidder, Jennings and Shook 1946:45). However, the *talud-tablero* platforms lacked the balustrades typical of Mexican architecture and were topped by local-style superstructures. When looked at in their entirety, there is a large degree of retention of local architectural conventions. Overall, it appears that architects at Kaminaljuyu selectively adopted and rejected certain elements of *talud-tablero* architecture.

pursuit of these goals, Kidder et al. felt that “architectural evidence”, while valuable, was too imprecise to link to a specific date, ethnicity or culture area (Kidder, Jennings and Shook 1946:218). As such, their discussion of architecture encompassed only four pages of the report while the majority of analysis centered on burial furniture and ceramics. Archaeologists focused their attention on changes in ceramic forms and decorative motifs that they viewed as more accurate indicators of chronology and cultural affinity. Kidder, Jennings and Shook asserted that the presence of Mexican ceramic forms in Maya elite burials offered conclusive evidence that “Teotihuacán had an extraordinary impact on the developmental trajectory of Kaminaljuyu” (Braswell 2002a:83). Kidder was openly cautious about historical reconstructions based on limited data, but nevertheless turned to ceramic analysis to interpret what exactly this “extraordinary impact” had been.

The Carnegie report paid significant attention to the technique, formal qualities and iconographic elements of 11 stuccoed and painted vessels found in tombs A-VI and B-II. The technique of stucco ceramic decoration is believed to be a Central Mexican innovation and is often seen as diagnostic of Mexican ceramic production. The vessels found at Kaminaljuyu shared the stucco technique of Mexican ceramics; however, they deviated greatly in other qualities such as paste composition, iconography, style and proportion. The use of local materials and a preference for traditional Highland motifs suggested that most of the stuccoed vessels were actually produced at Kaminaljuyu. Only a handful of objects, deemed “imports”, conformed exactly to Teotihuacán

standards of proportion, design and decoration (Kidder, Jennings and Shook 1946:228-229).[5] Despite such variation, Kidder et al. argued that the presence of foreign ceramic forms strongly suggested that Kaminaljuyu was at the very least a powerful market center with strong and long-lasting connections with Central Mexico.

For Kidder et al., the economic ties between Teotihuacán and Kaminaljuyu were obvious; however, they also believed that the two cities shared a stronger, more politically charged relationship. Pursuant of this theory, the Carnegie project was the first to look beyond trade relationships and toward the ideological factors behind cultural change (Berlo 1983:34-35). Kidder et al. based their model and interpretations on changes in architectural style.[6] They state, "Such great and sudden changes certainly suggest an influx of new architectural ideas and their nature points strongly toward Teotihuacán" (Kidder, Jennings and Shook 1946:45). Since architecture is massive and relatively permanent, Kidder et al. believed that it required a direct (and external) influence on architectural production to make changes to the form and/or function of structures. This assertion hinges on the assumption that form and/or style always follow function and change comes from the outside. Furthermore, Kidder et al. argued that changes in the style of architecture that functioned as burial pyramids must reflect the introduction or imposition of new ceremonial behavior that altered Kaminaljuyu's

[5] There has not to date been any chemical analysis on the ceramics of Kaminaljuyu so there is no scientific confirmation of the origins of the non-Highland ceramic forms.
[6] The choice to discuss architecture in this context is curious as it received limited presentation and analysis in the excavation report and had been dismissed as an ambiguous source of information (Kidder, Jennings and Shook 1946:218).

funerary practices. What Kidder viewed as a "sudden change" in architectural style strongly suggested a political and/or military conquest resulting in Teotihuacán acting as overlord of Kaminaljuyu (Kidder, Jennings and Shook 1946:255).[7] He rejects models of diffusion due to what he saw as an exact replication of Mexican architectural elements and ceramic forms. This argument was based on the assumption that local artists were not capable of faithful imitation of foreign aesthetic standards (Kidder, Jennings and Shook 1946:255). However, purely Mexican-style objects and architecture were rare within the area excavated and even rarer in the city as a whole.[8] More common were ceramics and architecture that combined Mexican elements with local techniques and stylistic, formal and iconographic features. The study also focused on the influence of Mexican art and architecture despite the presence of several Maya Lowland ceramic forms found within the same burials. Overall, Kidder et al. focused solely on artistic innovation with little consideration of the persistence of local tradition and possible artistic sources beyond Teotihuacán. Further explorations at Kaminaljuyu eventually revealed more localized control over artistic production that balanced the

[7] Kidder et al. operate throughout this report on the assumption that the appearance of stuccoed ceramics in *talud-tablero* structures represents a sudden change in artistic and architectural production. However, in his discussion of stuccoed ceramics, Kidder states that the Mexican technique was in use at Kaminaljuyu during the earlier Miraflores period (100 BC-250 AD) (Kidder, Jennings and Shook 1946:242). The presence of foreign objects or at least the adoption of foreign techniques at such an early date suggests that the appearance of elements of Mexican visual culture may not have been as sudden as Kidder proposed.

[8] There is also little discussion of the marked absence of several types of ceramics and architectural elements common to Teotihuacán (Kidder, Jennings and Shook:256). Such an absence suggests that the appearance of Mexican ceramic forms was probably the result of a more active and selective process.

appropriation of foreign elements from multiple regions including Central Mexico, the Pacific Slope, the Maya Lowlands and Southeastern cultures with the retention of local artistic conventions (Braswell 2003a,b).

The Carnegie excavations at Kaminaljuyu changed the course of Mesoamerican studies by forcing scholars to rethink previous ideas surrounding chronology and the nature of intercultural interaction. Their establishment of a relative chronology for Teotihuacán allowed scholars to consider the city an active member of a larger interaction sphere that included contemporary cities outside of Central Mexico.[9] Kidder et al. admitted that the nature of interaction may never be fully understood, but promoted a view of Esperanza culture as the product of outside influences and/or control (Kidder, Jennings and Shook 1946:256). The Carnegie report clearly presented Teotihuacán as the dominant cultural source despite finding local, Pacific Coast and Lowland artifacts in Kaminaljuyu tombs. They argued that the presence of Lowland-style ceramics at Kaminaljuyu was most likely the product of diffusion or trade, not conquest. This belief was in part due to a lack of excavation in the Lowland region but also reflected current scholarly beliefs that the Maya were peaceful priests with no military ambition. He states:

[9] Braswell effectively summarizes the role the Carnegie project had in solving several of the chronological problems that restricted our understanding of interregional interaction. He states, "By tying Central Mexican-ceramic chronologies to that of Kaminaljuyu, which in turn could be linked to the sequences of lowland Maya sites containing hieroglyphic monuments, Kidder et al. (1946) provided the first reliable calendar dates – albeit subject to the correlation controversy – for Teotihuacán" (Braswell 2003a:footnote 1).

> "Commercial contacts and diffusion of ideas seem sufficient to account for most of such surely Maya traits as we have noted…Conquest from that direction also seems unlikely, for there is little or no evidence that the Maya, of the lowlands at least, were ever given to military forays" (Kidder, Jennings and Shook 1946:255).

According to Kidder et al, if there was a military incursion or conquest at Kaminaljuyu it must have been at the hand of the more warlike peoples of Central Mexico. At the same time, there was no belief that Teotihuacán had any impact or control over the Maya Lowlands. Therefore, the direct and possibly controlling relationship between Kaminaljuyu and Teotihuacán was considered unique in the Maya region (Braswell 2002a:83). The Carnegie report established a model for the study of material culture where form and style directly followed function and changes in style reflected changes in economic relationships and/or political control. To the present day, this model continues to inform studies of stylistic change and supports arguments that suggest an intrusive and controlling Teotihuacán presence in the Maya region.

Pennsylvania State Excavations at Kaminaljuyu

Kaminaljuyu continued to dominate scholarly inquiry into Mexican/Maya connections well into the 1970s and 1980s. Excavations led by Pennsylvania State University, under the directorship of William Sanders and Joseph W. Michels, expanded on the work of the Carnegie project. The Penn State excavations extended the area of investigation beyond the southeastern section and into the city's urban core and surrounding residential districts [Map 7]. The methodological focus of the project, and

the majority of archaeological research at the time, was on settlement patterns and demographics particularly within non-elite residential compounds. Sanders and Michels found a few elite burials that contained Mexican materials and object types such as: green obsidian, pyrite mirrors and cylinder tripod and ring-stand vessels. They did not, however, uncover a single example of *talud-tablero* architectural features (Cheek 1977a:169-187). Overall, the Penn State project argued that there was little evidence to support earlier suggestions of a direct relationship with Teotihuacán that may have involved military conquest and/or political domination. Instead they proposed a model of interaction based on processual archaeological theory that privileged indirect ties between the two regions. The Penn State model rejected Kidder's humanistic interpretation in favor of a material approach that centered on the ecological and economic factors behind cultural change. Based on this model of interaction, Sanders et al. viewed Teotihuacán influence in terms of the expansion of the state via colonization, mercantile and/or diplomatic contacts (Berlo 1983:33). Within this view, stylistic change was evidence of Teotihuacán's economic expansion and ultimate control of Kaminaljuyu's labor force and standards of artistic production.

In *Teotihuacán and Kaminaljuyu*, one of six volumes produced by the Penn State project, Sanders presents a chronology of Kaminaljuyu's political development from a Formative period chiefdom (500 BC–200 AD) to a Classic period state (200-650 AD) [Table 2]. Proposed stages of political development are closely calibrated with changes in the economic relationship with Teotihuacán as evidenced by the appearance

and disappearance of Mexican art and architecture at Kaminaljuyu. According to Sanders et al., the lack of Mexican goods in the archaeological record prior to 500 AD represents a lack of trade and/or political interaction with Teotihuacán. The presence of several "pure Teotihuacán style" goods in rich burials dating between 500-550 AD suggests that this was the peak moment of trade with Teotihuacán and political change at Kaminaljuyu.[10] They argue that during this period merchants or economic agents from Teotihuacán probably resided at Kaminaljuyu but did not serve as a dominating political or military force (Sanders 1977:405). This argument models itself on the imperial Aztec p*ochteca*, or professional merchant, system that required the temporary residence of merchants at provincial trade outposts. Foreign residents within provincial enclaves would have continued homeland religious practices as a means of maintaining ethnicity and cultural cohesion outside the imperial center (Sanders 1977:405-407). Sanders et al. (like Kidder et al. before them) stated that provincial religious practice would have included homeland-style ritual objects with forms and symbols that were not likely to be accurately reproduced by local artists. The merchant/enclave model suggested by Sanders assumes that standards of artistic production are directly connected to ethnicity; therefore, any new styles, forms or iconography must be linked to the physical presence of foreigners. Based on this model, they linked what were seen as "radical changes" in demographics and the disappearance of Mexican-style ceramics

[10] Very few objects found at Kaminaljuyu can truly be described as "pure Teotihuacán-style". Most objects share similarities or directly copy some Mexican forms and symbols but typically in conjunction with local elements of style, technique and/or decoration.

between 550 and 600 AD to the decline of the economic relationship with Teotihuacán. The termination of economic ties probably resulted in a withdrawal of foreign merchants from Kaminaljuyu. This withdrawal would have terminated the production of Mexican-style goods and prompted what was interpreted as a "sudden return" to local styles and techniques (Sanders 1977:402**)**.[11] The Penn State project presented a chronology in which phases of economic interaction and consequent cultural change began with initial contact during the fifth century, intensified through Teotihuacán control of local labor in the sixth century and terminated with the withdrawal of contact during the seventh century. On the whole, the Penn State project presented a model of interaction in which Teotihuacán artistic influence on Kaminaljuyu was directly linked to a fluctuating economic relationship between the two cities. Within this model, trade interests, the presence of a merchant class and foreign control over local labor were responsible for cultural production and an indirect means of political control.

There are several problems with the model proposed by the Penn State project. Firstly, there is little acknowledgement that local traditions continued to dominate artistic and architectural production across all three proposed phases of interaction. Secondly, it is based on the assumption that stylistic change is the product of face-to-face contact and exchange, in which new forms are introduced to passive local

[11] Like Kidder, Sanders et al. pass over the fact that they consistently found local-style goods alongside foreign ceramic forms and symbols. Furthermore, Mexican ceramic forms were extremely rare within the area excavated by the Penn State project. Local ceramics dominate the archaeological record across all three proposed phases of interaction. Therefore, it is problematic to equate a disappearance of Mexican ceramic forms with a "sudden return" of local-style ceramics, when in fact they never left.

"receivers" through physically present foreigners. There is no room in this model for agency on the part of local artists who may have selectively adopted elements of foreign culture through the process of appropriation. Based on this assumption, changes in art forms and/or styles must represent either foreign control over local labor or the presence of foreign artisans. In either case stylistic change is linked to socioeconomic institutions of trade and institutionalized labor without consideration of the nature of artistic production in its own right. As stated by Janet Berlo, the primary interest of the Penn State project was to use Mexican-style objects to uncover the nature of the trade system. She states, "Too often it seems that scholars interested in processual models use art as 'evidence' for something else, without being attentive to the intrinsic subtleties of art objects" (Berlo 1983: 34).

The Tikal Project

The true scope or scale of Mexican influence in the Maya Lowlands was not fully appreciated until the University of Pennsylvania began excavations at the site of Tikal, Guatemala under the direction of William Coe [Map 2]. The early years of the project were concerned with defining the extent of the city, its settlement patterns and architectural development as well as recording its artifacts in an effort to "provide a baseline for gauging local population and density and grounds for understanding daily life and overall Maya social organization" (Coe and Haviland 1982:28) Theoretically, the Tikal Project viewed art and architecture as the by-product of social behavior and therefore an effective source of information for the reconstruction of social

organization, demographics, economic systems and ritual activity. Architecture was excavated not only for the recovery of artifacts but also to establish a construction sequence which provided a relative chronology for the urban development and population growth of Tikal when compared to the ceramic sequence [Table 2a]. The form, style and iconography of art objects and architecture were not considered in their own right but as a data set that revealed information about Tikal's history, civic growth and social structure.

Excavations in the North Acropolis from 1956 to 1970 revealed a number of burials and problematic deposits containing Mexican ceramic forms as well as stone monuments with iconography and textual references to Teotihuacán [Fig. 4]. As was the case at Kaminaljuyu, Mexican material was found in conjunction with Peten-style objects and imagery. One of the more significant finds was Stela 31, a monument bearing portraits of individuals wearing elements of Mexican warrior costume [Fig. 5]. For art historian Tatiana Proskouriakoff, the iconography of Stela 31 provided definitive proof of a direct connection between Teotihuacán and the Maya although the nature of that connection remained a mystery (Proskouriakoff 1993:4-10).[12] For epigraphers, the texts of Stela 31 confirmed Proskouriakoff's suspicions and paved the way for a historical inquiry into the nature of Mexican/Maya interaction. Interestingly, studies have presented the data in a variety of ways that support theories on both sides of the

[12] Later developments in the decipherment of the hieroglyphs from Stela 31 revealed a dynastic history with possible genealogical connections to the rulers of Teotihuacán (Stuart 2000, 2004; Martin and Grube 2000).

interaction debate. Material evidence from Tikal has been used to argue for direct political control that may have included an intrusive presence as well as a more indirect connection based on stylistic and/or ideological appropriation. As such, Tikal remains at the center of what is even today a strongly contested debate on the nature of Maya/Maya interaction.[13]

The *Tikal Reports*, a multivolume collection of excavation reports, presents a thorough record of the architectural sequence, burials, ceramic material and art objects recovered by the project.[14] The reports make up the primary data set for any investigation into Mexican/Maya interaction, particularly at Tikal. The reports themselves contain little interpretative material; however, the information presented has spawned multiple articles, books and dissertations written by William Coe and others, many of which will be discussed later in this chapter. The position of Tikal Project archaeologists on the Teotihuacán question is best summarized in a 1972 article by project director Coe entitled, "Cultural Contact between the Lowland Maya and Teotihuacán as seen from Tikal, Peten, Guatemala". In this article Coe takes a cautious approach to the question of influence and/or interaction. Critical of earlier investigators seeking to compartmentalize interaction into distinct periods of influence or control, he

[13] The principal sources on this debate include: Kubler 1973; Proskouriakoff 1993; Coggins 1975,1988; Schele and Freidel 1990; Martin and Grube 2000; Stuart 2000,2004; Stone 1989. A strong summary of both sides of the debate and their theoretical underpinnings can be found in Braswell 2003a.

[14] The *Tikal Reports* are as of yet still incomplete and many of the project's findings remain unpublished. The majority of records are archived in the University Museum at the University of Pennsylvania. This study will only consider material published before 2004.

states, "…we cannot be sure that we have not uselessly segmented a continuous though changing Mexican infusion of Peten life" (Coe 1972:258). He recommends scholarly analysis of the entire range of contact evidenced through the broadest possible data set of material. For Coe, the proper evaluation of cultural continuity and change as it relates to foreign relationships requires a "proper systematic handling of sameness and difference over time" (Coe 1972:260). Like earlier projects, Coe considered changes in ceramic style as determined by typological analysis the primary indicator of cultural change. At this point in time, scholars viewed artistic innovation as a by-product of "external influences" and therefore an effective indicator of "more important kinds of cultural contacts" such as migration and economic interaction (Culbert 1977:35-36). Although completely focused on ceramic style, Coe is one of the first archaeologists to take a relatively holistic approach to the archaeological record as a means of mapping out what he considered a long, dynamic and complex history of interaction that probably included an "ideological response to commercial impact"(Coe 1972:270).

The Tikal Project excavations in the North Acropolis revealed multiple examples of Mexican ceramic forms and iconography. The presence of Mexican symbols and forms on portable objects at Tikal paralleled Highland material evidence suggesting a level of interaction that at the very least included a trade relationship with Central Mexico. However, as at Kaminaljuyu, ceramic data alone was not enough to determine whether such relations were defined by an informal system of exchange or centralized control over the production and distribution of goods throughout the region.

The discovery of Mexican iconography on stone stelae at Tikal, particularly the display of ethnically distinct costume, seemingly reinforced models that proposed direct connections with Central Mexico. Mexican symbols and costume appeared primarily on Early Classic monuments, such as Stela 31, furthering ideas that interaction with Central Mexico coincided with, and may have been responsible for what many viewed as radical social, political and cultural changes in Early Classic Tikal (Proskouriakoff 1993; Coggins 1975).[15] However, the Tikal Project's excavations in the North Acropolis failed to provide evidence of interaction in the more permanent and public medium of architecture. The construction of monumental architecture was one of the primary responsibilities of kings. Because of the strong connection between the ruler and the spaces that surrounded him, architecture was relatively conservative in its layout and style in order to maintain the sanctity of sacred space and the rituals that took place there. Therefore, if there had been a significant shift in political, social or cultural structure, it should have been reflected in architectural change. The failure of the Tikal Project to find any architectural evidence of a foreign presence left many scholars skeptical of the political connections suggested by iconography. At the conclusion of the Tikal project, the question remained that if there had been a direct connection

[15] At this time, texts could not be read at a level that could reinforce or challenge what was depicted in the imagery. Historical texts did not enter into the debate until Clemency Coggins presented a dynastic history for Tikal in her 1975 dissertation. Since then, refinements in dynastic history of Tikal and a greater understanding of the political structure of Teotihuacán have helped to clarify the historic and political relationship between the two cities (Harrison 1999; Stuart 2000; Martin and Grube 2000; Sugiyama 2002)

between the two cities that resulted in a major political and/or cultural shift, why was there no change in the style or layout of the built environment of Tikal?

El Proyecto Nacional de Tikal

Previous models of interaction attempted to reconstruct a Teotihuacán "sphere of influence" from multiple data sources such as ceramic style, economic behavior and religious practice as revealed through ritual objects. However, by the 1980s, scholars on both sides of the debate began to focus on *talud-tablero* architecture as a diagnostic feature of Teotihuacán influence and/or political control. For most of these scholars, architectural stylistic canons were determined by ethnicity; therefore, the construction of *talud-tablero* architecture could only be the product of Teotihuacanos or Teotihuacán-trained architects. Furthermore, scholars traditionally treated *talud-tablero* as a uniform architectural style and a single formal unit, not as a dynamic stylistic complex. They worked from the assumption that all *talud-tablero* perfectly replicated architecture produced at Teotihuacán while ignoring regional distinctions in stylistic composition and context. Therefore, all appearances of *talud-tablero* architecture outside of Teotihuacán were automatically considered the product of direct cultural influence and/or control over architectural production.[16] Excavations and subsequent

[16] George Kubler was the first to approach architectural style as a visual language and an indicator of "conventional meaning" (Kubler 1973:275). His 1973 article entitled "Iconographic Aspects of Architectural Profiles at Teotihuacán and in Mesoamerica" linked the relationship between architectural form and function to broader concepts of ethnic identity. As such, Kubler essentially initiated the idea that *talud-tablero* could be used as a diagnostic device because, he argued, the style carried culturally specific meaning as a marker of sacred space.

interpretations of architectural data uncovered by the Proyecto Nacional de Tikal (PNT) challenged these earlier models of cultural determinism and their monolithic and fixed definitions of architectural style. PNT also provided a revision of Tikal's ceramic sequence and a new methodology for shaping the site's chronology that further questioned existing models of interaction between Tikal and Teotihuacán.

El Proyecto Nacional de Tikal (1979-1985), under the direction of Juan Pedro Laporte, focused their excavations on the Mundo Perdido complex and Group 6C-XVI, the primary locations of early *talud-tablero* architecture [Figs. 6,7].[17] According to Laporte, the structures differ in both date and "sociopolitical use" or function (Laporte 1987:270). The form, layout and contents of the structures suggest that the Mundo Perdido was a ceremonial complex whereas Group 6C-XVI was most likely a specialized residential group somehow connected with the ballgame and warfare (Laporte 1992:322-325; Laporte 2003:298-299). Excavations in both areas revealed multiple layers of architecture with a variety of *talud-tablero* features often in combination with conventional Maya architectural elements. Interestingly, they found only one example of what could be considered "pure" Teotihuacán -style *talud-tablero* architecture, an Early Classic layer of Structure 5C-49 (Laporte 1987:289-92) [Fig. 8]. Although several scholars had used the term, Laporte was one of the first archaeologists to offer a definition of "pure" Teotihuacán -style *talud-tablero* as a point of comparison

[17] Chapter Three presents the specific architectural details, layout and contents of these and other structures. This chapter is intended to discuss methodological and theoretical approaches to the excavated material.

to what was found at Tikal.[18] Laporte bases his definition of *talud-tablero* on the work of Paul Gendrop who defined it as an architectural form consisting of a single short *talud* with an overhanging *tablero* decorated by a thin sculpted frame [Fig. 9a]. At Teotihuacán, *talud-tablero* elements were present on all four sides and on all levels of the substructure interrupted only by stairways with balustrades or *alfardas* (Gendrop 1984:49-52) [Fig. 9b]. Gendrop also notes a standard 1:2 proportion on most structures at Teotihuacán with the upper portion of the structure, the *tablero*, as the dominant form. Laporte uses Gendrop's definition to point out that the *talud-tablero* architectural style was not a single form but a combination of multiple formal elements. At Teotihuacán, the combination of elements that make up the *talud-tablero* style were strictly codified, with remarkably little variation within the city's architecture (Gendrop 1984; Giddens 1995:30). However, *talud-tablero* architecture outside of Teotihuacán is rarely identical to the Teotihuacán standard [Fig. 10]. In Oaxaca and the Maya region, the style takes on a more eclectic character exemplified by a selective usage of *talud-tablero* elements in a variety of combinations that are often integrated with local architectural conventions (Giddens 1995:32-33). When the style is compared on a regional level, *talud-tablero* reveals itself as what Juan Pedro Laporte calls an

[18] Laporte cites Gendrop as his principal source, but his methodology draws heavily on the work of George Kubler. Kubler's 1973 article, "Iconographic Aspects of Architectural Profiles at Teotihuacán and in Mesoamerica" was the earliest attempt to define the visual qualities and symbolism of the *talud-tablero* style (Kubler 1973, Reprinted in *The Collected Essays of George Kubler*, edited by Thomas Reese, pp. 275-279. New Haven: Yale).

integrated “complex of features” adopted and modified in various combinations throughout Mesoamerica (Laporte 1987:299).

Laporte also cautioned against equating the *talud-tablero* architectural style with a Teotihuacán ethnic identity and evidence of physical occupation or political control. He argued against viewing this architectural style as an isolated form “encased in a determinate culture that impresses its architecture and ritual significance” on other cultures (Laporte 1987:310). Laporte’s treatment of *talud-tablero* as an architectural “symbol set”, as opposed to a cultural diagnostic, separates the style from the theoretical framework of cultural determinism. Turning the methodological focus to localized usage of the *talud-tablero* style emphasizes the process of artistic choice, returning agency to local architects and allowing for the persistence of tradition alongside innovation. This approach allows for the possibility of active and diverse appropriation of individual elements of architectural style rather than the passive reception of imposed standards of artistic production. Laporte’s work confirms that the Early Classic was a period of intense interaction between the Maya and Central Mexico but cautions against a direct correlation between contact and control over standards of artistic production. On the whole, Laporte attempted to reverse the approach of Sanders and others who tied architectural style to commercial and political relationships that required the physical presence of Teotihuacanos at Maya cities. Instead, he focused on the Maya as actors in intercultural relationships that provided valuable ideas residing in

"what [William] Coe called the 'ideological response to commercial impact'" (Laporte 1992:327).

Laporte tracks the appearance of individual *talud-tablero* elements over time to show that although the form was rare, it had been used at Tikal over a long period of time and in a variety of combinations despite any changes in political organization, dynastic lineage and/or economic relationships (Laporte 2003:284).[19] In this way style is treated independently from ideological, political and cultural baggage in a way that suggests the adoption of stylistic traits was not necessarily a direct reflection of a change in control over artistic production. Laporte focuses on continuity in the general use of *talud-tablero* (in any form) over time in a way that attempts to debunk previous studies that suggested a cyclical appearance of the style that fluctuated in relationship to changing commercial and/or political ties. In a sense, he finally divorces the style from the assumption that it was exclusive to Teotihuacán. Instead he presents *talud-tablero* as a stylistic canon accepted across Mesoamerica over a long period of time and adopted on varying levels (Laporte 2003:294-295, see also Kubler 1973; Giddens 1995). More importantly he separates the form of *talud-tablero* from the specific cultural

[19] Laporte suggests that the earliest appearance of *talud-tablero* elements dates to the Middle Preclassic period (as early as 500 BC), well before the historical/political events of the Early Classic (Laporte and Fialko 1990:46). This assertion remains controversial because it rests on his tentative re-evaluation of the ceramic sequence and his revised chronology for the Manik phase. He is, however, able to separate his definitions and analysis of architectural style from arbitrary chronological periods to show that the style does have a long and varied history at Tikal.

significance it had at Teotihuacán and focuses on localized applications and symbolic associations of the style.

Earlier models of interaction depended on a chronology that placed the strongest point of Mexican influence at the same moment in time as one of the greatest periods of cultural change, the beginning of the Early Classic. Until the 1980s, this chronology was based solely on ceramic stylistic analysis, a subjective process that ordered ceramic types along a stylistic progression that determined a relative chronology based on formal change over time. Laporte was skeptical of the use of ceramic typology as both a basis for establishing chronology and as the sole measure of cultural change because it was dependent on subjective categories of analysis and comparison (Laporte 1987:308). He believed a more accurate chronology could be derived through tracking changes in ceramic and architectural forms in relation to dynastic history revealed by the hieroglyphic record.[20] In subsequent reports, Laporte and his colleagues re-evaluated the ceramic chronology in an attempt to "clarify the context and temporal position of various elements treated as diagnostic of foreign influence" with a particular focus on architecture and site planning (Laporte 2003:199).[21] Overall, Laporte and Fialko

[20] Laporte and Fialko based their chronology on dates and events presented in the work of Clemency Coggins, primarily her dissertation of 1975. More recent studies by Simon Martin, Nikolai Grube, David Stuart and others present a revised dynastic history that may challenge elements of Laporte's proposed chronology.

[21] Both Laporte and his colleague, Vilma Fialko, presented major problems with the Early Classic ceramic sequence, particularly the Manik phase. Laporte and Fialko used the ceramic material uncovered in the Mundo Perdido to adjust the ceramic sequence proposed by the Tikal Project. They broke the Manik phase into four sub-phases, a revision to Culbert's three sub-phases: Manik 1 (250-300 AD) is characterized as a

presented a chronology that moves the start of the Manik phase back in time by about 50 years to 250 AD, more than one hundred years before the first known textual reference to Central Mexico [Table 2b]. This new ceramic sequence raises issue with a direct chronological connection between the "arrival of strangers" at Tikal in 378 AD and the introduction of Mexican ceramic forms, iconography and architectural features. Through a reassessment of the ceramic sequence, Laporte and Fialko were able to place the presence of Mexican ceramic forms and *talud-tablero* architecture at Tikal well before the political changes of the Early Classic.[22] This chronology is more in line with their idea that *talud-tablero* existed as a pan-Mesoamerican style that was not tied to a particular cultural group.[23]

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short transitional period with both Preclassic and Early Classic traditions; Manik 2 (300-400 AD) marks the first presence of foreign-style objects; Manik 3a (400-500 AD) is marked by a significant presence of foreign aspects within the local ceramic inventory and the use of foreign-style objects in ritual contexts; Manik 3b (500-550 AD) represented by an abandonment of foreign features and a turn toward Late Classic cultural production (Laporte and Fialko 1987:162). The new classification defined each sub-phase by both formal/stylistic characteristics and their correlation with the dynastic record. This was the first attempt to "ground" ceramic typology in history as presented in hieroglyphic texts. Laporte and Fialko believed that textual correlation provided a more accurate chronology than stylistic analysis alone. However, they did not consider the subjectivity and/or selectivity of texts that tend to be retrospective accounts. It is also difficult to correlate the chronology and context of ceramics on the basis of relative association with the sculpture displaying texts. Even if the two are found right next to each other on the same stratigraphic layer, this may not be the original context for either object as the Maya often moved or "re-contextualized" most of their monuments and ceramics over time.

[22] PNT consistently used ceramic evidence as its primary source in the development of a construction sequence. All architectural dates should be considered as tentative due to the subjective nature of this method of dating.

[23] As we will see, this theory is somewhat contradictory to his approach to architectural style on the local level. Laporte consistently shows a strong interest in correlating divergent architectural styles at Tikal with different and competing local lineage groups.

The Early Copan Acropolis Project

The site of Copan is located in the northwest corner of Honduras near the eastern border of Guatemala [Map 2,6]. Like Tikal, Copan has a long history of investigation dating back to the nineteenth century. Almost one hundred years of study and excavation have produced a range of findings that date from the Preclassic (1100 BC–250 AD), Early Classic (250-550 AD) and Late Classic (550–909 AD) periods [Table 5]. Because this dissertation centers on the Early Classic period, it is heavily reliant on the work of Robert Sharer and the Early Copan Acropolis Program or ECAP. ECAP is a project that investigated the origins and development of the Early Classic royal complex at Copan. This summary presents the theoretical goals and methodological approach of the project with particular attention to the treatment of architectural style. Chapter Three presents a more detailed discussion of the project's findings and interpretations.

The University of Pennsylvania Museum sponsored excavations at Copan between 1989 and 2000 known as the Early Copán Acropolis program (ECAP). The project began under the direction of Robert J. Sharer with the collection of archaeological data though the excavation of three kilometers of tunnels under the Acropolis. The vast network of tunnels revealed architecture, monuments, tombs and

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In particular, Laporte equates the appearance and disappearance of *talud-tablero* architecture with the rise and fall of the Jaguar Paw lineage (Laporte and Fialko 1990). This approach may divorce *talud-tablero* from its supposed foreign source but continues to equate architectural style with ethnic identity.

other elements of material culture dating from the relatively unknown Early Classic period. Later field seasons (1997-2000) focused on the investigation and conservation of architecture and burials from the earliest versions of the Acropolis constructed in the early fifth century (Sharer, Traxler et al. 1999; Sharer 2000). Recent research at Copan, including ECAP, has been guided by what William Fash and Robert Sharer call the "conjunctive approach" to archaeology. This interdisciplinary approach seeks to reconcile archaeological data, material remains, iconography and the historical data provided by hieroglyphic inscriptions as a means of resolving "specific questions about the past", particularly the "origins of state systems as revealed by the conjunction of archaeology and history" (Fash and Sharer 1991; Sharer, Traxler, et al. 1999; Sharer 2000:¶2; Canuto, Bell and Sharer 2004:8-9). Keeping abreast with advancements in epigraphic research and archaeological theory, ECAP applied the conjunctive approach to the investigation of Copan's Early Classic history through the use of innovative excavation techniques designed to preserve as many levels of construction as possible. The use of tunnel excavation provided a relatively complete view of the construction sequence of the Acropolis and a more accurate means of reconstructing its formal and functional development over time. Overall, ECAP hoped to provide archaeological confirmation of the hieroglyphic records of the period of dynastic foundation through an investigation of the architecture and artifacts from the earliest layers of construction of the acropolis.

Until recently, archaeologists were skeptical about the historical "accuracy" of hieroglyphic texts, particularly those that were retrospective in nature. Several Late Classic texts at Copan mentioned an individual named K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo', referred to as the "founder", who claimed power in 426 AD and "arrived" at Copan in 427 AD (Schele 1986; Stuart and Schele 1986; Martin and Grube 2000; Stuart 2000). However, scholars from all fields were divided on whether early kings (such as Yax K'uk' Mo') mentioned in retrospective texts were actual people or the mythical creation of later kings. Previous scholarship also heavily doubted that the Maya had achieved any level of political, social and cultural complexity before the Late Classic period. ECAP tracked architectural development (defined by construction sequence and not stylistic change) in relation to iconographic and epigraphic data found within that architecture to confirm the historical existence of the dynastic founder, K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo'. The level of architectural sophistication and monumentality of the earliest levels of the acropolis suggest that K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo'' wielded centralized control over labor and materials. Sharer argued that this control as well as evidence of royal palace construction confirmed the existence of a state-level society at Copan during the Early Classic (Sharer 2000:¶4; Traxler 1996, 2003).

Twelve seasons of excavation revealed multiple layers of architectural construction dating from dynastic foundation in the early fifth century to the collapse of the dynasty in the ninth century. Excavation and documentation of these early levels completed the architectural sequence of the Acropolis and provided information about

the city's origins and early development (Canuto, Bell and Sharer 2004:11). Superimposed structures beneath the Late Classic manifestations of 10L-16 and 10L-26 visually and spatially emphasized the significance of specific locations within the Acropolis (Traxler 2003:46) [Figs. 11,12]. The Maya traditionally razed and built over existing structures in order to preserve the sanctity of a given space. This process allowed rulers to reinforce their power over time through a connection to their ancestors. At Copan, the long construction sequence of Temples 16 and 26 provided a physical connection with the structures Hunal and Yax, the earliest structures of the Acropolis, and metaphorical connection with their builder - the founder, K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo' [Fig. 13]. ECAP thoroughly investigated each of these constructions recording their overall form, plan, elevation, materials and construction technique. Of all of the structures of the Early Classic Acropolis, only two, Hunal and Papagayo, had *talud-tablero* features. The unique architectural qualities of Hunal in particular led Sharer and others to question the ethnic identity and homeland of the founder that texts suggested had "arrived" at Copan. Like projects at Tikal and other sites, ECAP was interested in determining the nature of Copan's relationship with the rest of the Maya Lowlands, Highlands and Central Mexico. Fash and Sharer rejected models followed by earlier archaeologists that searched for the external origins of complex civilization at Copan and instead focused on the internal cultural development (W. Fash 1994:75-76) In line with this theoretical interest, ECAP often equated architectural style to ethnicity or the place of origin of the builder. There is no questioning of the coincidence of *talud-tablero* and conventional Maya-style architecture on Hunal or Papagayo. Instead, there

is a determined focus on how *talud-tablero* elements emphasized "foreign-ness" and provide physical evidence of speculations about the nature of the "arrival event" of 426-7 AD.

Art Historical Approaches

Clemency Chase Coggins

Four decades of archaeological exploration at Tikal produced enough material evidence to suggest that interaction with Central Mexico had some kind of impact on Early Classic Maya culture, at least at Tikal. However, few scholars searched for meaning behind the Mexican forms and symbols uncovered at Tikal as a means of understanding the nature of and reasons behind that impact. Perhaps the most heavily cited source on this topic is a 1975 dissertation by Clemency Chase Coggins entitled, *Painting and Drawing Styles at Tikal: An Historical and Iconographic Reconstruction.* Coggins' dissertation was the first attempt at synthesizing the rich archaeological, iconographic and historical data uncovered by the Tikal Project. Coggins, an art historian, approached the large data set in a systematic way that sought to track patterns of style and iconography and reconcile the visual record with its historical context.[24] What makes Coggins' work such a valuable source is her thorough catalog of objects associated with each chronological period and individual ruler from the Preclassic through the Late Classic. On the whole, her study sought to set up a firm historical base

[24] For Coggins, historical context includes events, people and dates revealed in the hieroglyphic record.

that created a “framework allowing us to begin to map changes in Teotihuacán influence in the Peten. By charting artistic change [across a range of media], we may posit cultural change as well” (Berlo 1983:37).

Any attempt at historical reconstruction must first deal with the dilemma of establishing a relative chronology. Coggins rightly questions then current methodology that reconstructed chronology based solely on ceramic type-variety analysis. She argued that a singular focus on changes in ceramic style did not account for other areas of cultural production that may have different stylistic sequences, rates of innovation or stronger ties to tradition (Coggins 1975:5). She updates her methodology to compare painting and drawing styles across a number of media including murals, ceramics, sculpture and burial assemblages in an attempt to establish a more complete chronology. Although expanded from earlier studies to include multiple media, she remains selective in her data set and includes only decorated objects, with particular interest in those with “readable” iconography and hieroglyphic texts. Her choice to consider only decorated objects provides a limited picture but allows for an easier comparison between text and image. Her selectivity reflects a theoretical and methodological shift within the field of Maya studies. Due to advancements in hieroglyphic decipherment in the late 1970s, Coggins and other scholars began to view written texts as objective sources and a more “accurate” determinate of chronology than more subjective systems such as ceramic typology and stylistic/iconographic analysis. The narrative structure of text provided a progression of events through time - the linear

timetable necessary to establish a basic chronology from which information from all other systems of communication could be measured.

Before hieroglyphic decipherment had reached any level of sophistication, iconographic analysis, a more subjective method of cultural reconstruction, was the primary means of gaining a glimpse into the everyday lives of Maya rulers. Coggins wrote her dissertation at a time when epigraphic research was just beginning to reveal the protagonists and events that humanized and activated Maya history. With these advancements, scholars began to privilege the written record as the most objective means of reconstructing the Maya past. The visual record often took on a supporting role, only approached as an "illustration" of the historical narrative contained within the text. As an art historian, Coggins was interested in elevating the significance of the visual record in historical reconstruction. However, instead of exploring the unique qualities of the visual arts as a form of communication, she attempts to place imagery on par with text. As such, she approaches style as a language, a system of signs "charged with symbolic meaning closely related to and frequently interchangeable with the forms and meaning of hieroglyphic writing" (Coggins 1975:10). In treating style as a language she equates text and image in a way that makes them both narrative in structure and function. In other words, both text and image "tell a story". By "reading" both as a sequence of "events", either historical actions or aesthetic innovations, she is able to chart historical and stylistic development along a linear progression of time. Stylistic development advances along an evolutionary continuum that she believes

reaches the “expressive heights” that accompany the political complexity, economic growth and cultural sophistication introduced during the Early Classic (Coggins 1975:349).

Coggins privileges the historical record over ceramic typology and the linguistic model over stylistic analysis in what she feels is a more objective means of establishing a chronology for Tikal. However, her treatment of style remains very subjective and is not far off from the methodology of the type-variety system. She deconstructs the Maya art style into three definitive and easily comparable categories of design: pictorial, logographic and textual. It is almost as if she is trying to break down a stylistic “language” into a series of dialects with each category of design representing a different way of “saying” the same thing. However, her categories of design simultaneously and arbitrarily include symbolic, formal, stylistic and textual elements in a way that assumes all function in the same way and are structurally the same language. This approach blurs the lines between text, style and iconography in a way that conforms to her desire to uncover the meaning behind all visual elements without an understanding of how each system communicates that meaning. For example, she consistently points out stylistic qualities such as abstraction or naturalism but without a discussion of any patterns of context that may reveal how different styles convey information or why Maya artists employed multiple stylistic elements. Although her title suggests that she is attempting to reconstruct Tikal’s painting and drawing styles, the dissertation neither explores the nature of style nor discusses the role of style in the creation of history. Instead, she

characterizes style in a way that makes it an "objective" source of information and a valuable tool in the reconstruction of history. The overall goal of the dissertation is to uncover what she views as stylistic (but are more accurately iconographic and textual) themes as a method of categorizing visual elements in a way that systematically illustrates ritual behavior representative of the events revealed in the archaeological and epigraphic records.

Coggins' statement of methodology draws a distinction between local and foreign styles, but never completely defines the categories or the differences between them. She first establishes what she sees as the Tikal standard style or local canon from a comparison of selective decorated ceramic sherds found at the site. The process of categorization of foreign-style objects is less clear. She states, "When a vessel exhibits technical, stylistic or iconographic traits that are outside this local norm, it was assumed in most cases to have been imported to Tikal and to represent a foreign style" (Coggins 1975:6). In other words, "foreign-style" is set up as an oppositional category that covers anything which deviates from her definition of the local standard. On the one hand, this methodology significantly acknowledges a long-standing local artistic tradition when most other studies focused on the external origins of Maya art and outside influences. On the other hand, however, her argument is weakened by her attempt to make the process of tracking stylistic change more methodical through the creation of two "clearly" delineated stylistic categories. Coggins arbitrarily establishes the parameters of local and foreign styles in a way that creates two fixed categories that are assumed to

maintain a standard of representation over time and space. These categories also allow Coggins to tie stylistic development to economic control over the production and distribution of luxury objects. In other words, she argues that "local style" objects must have been produced at Tikal while all "foreign style" objects were produced on the outside and imported to Tikal. Coggins creates and compares fixed styles to track the changes in economic relationships, particularly with the Highland city of Kaminaljuyu, that she believes are responsible for cultural change.

Like many other scholars, Coggins presents the Preclassic period as a time of relative isolation and cultural conservatism that allowed the development of local aesthetic standards. She views innovation or variation of these standards as "cultural infusions" from the outside including other cities in the Maya region but with particular emphasis on Central Mexico (Coggins 1975:8). Furthermore, the technical, formal and iconographic innovations that "shaped" Early Classic Maya kingship, culture and economic prosperity came to the Maya region via exchange relationships with outside cultures (Coggins 1975:38-39). According to this model, political and cultural sophistication came from outside sources that brought a "new historical attitude" to the Maya region. She states,

> "This historical impulse was probably Mexican. The Maya were more attuned to the cosmos and their relation to it…With the arrival of the Mexicans in the Peten near the end of *baktun* nine [c. 400 AD] the forms of Maya art began to change, and continued to do so throughout the Classic period in response to these foreign impulses"(Coggins 1975:183).

Closely following the work of William Sanders at Kaminaljuyu, Coggins concluded that Mexican forms and symbols were introduced to Tikal through a trade relationship reinforced by dynastic ties with the "Mexicanized" highland city of Kaminaljuyu, Guatemala (Coggins 1983). There is no attempt to reconcile Early Classic artistic conventions and innovations in relation to Preclassic traditions at Tikal and other Maya sites. Instead, Coggins, guided by her advisor Tatiana Proskouriakoff, asserts that artistic change coincided with the interruption of "dynastic stability and isolation" by the "arrival of a foreigner from Kaminaljuyu [Curl Nose], who ruled for forty years and introduced traits of elite Mexican cultural culture to Tikal" (Coggins 1975:9). For Coggins any relationship between Teotihuacán and Tikal was indirect, and cultural innovation was filtered through Kaminaljuyu as part of a revival of ancient economic relationships between the sites (Coggins 1975,1983).

Janet Catherine Berlo

Written in 1980 at Yale University, Janet Catherine Berlo's dissertation entitled, *Teotihuacán Art Abroad: A Study of Metropolitan Style and Provincial Transformation in Incensario Workshops,* was one of the first art historical studies of Mexican/Highland Maya interaction. In her introduction, Berlo suggests a more humanistic approach to the problem that she believes had thus focused "less on the mechanics of a trade system than on its fruits" (Berlo 1983:2). She argued that art historical analysis was an effective counter-approach to processual archaeological studies that she argued were too preoccupied with model-building and uninterested in the nature of the objects used to

construct the models (Berlo 1983:34). Unlike the processual archaeologist, an art historian approaches the art object as,

> "…an individual expressive statement, disclosing information about the artist, craft and workshop. It is also a cultural artifact, from which we elicit meaning involving larger social issues; in this case, those issues include trade, religious proselytization and the intermixture of ethnic groups" (Berlo 1983:3).

Her dissertation focused on stylistic and iconographic changes in figural incense burners or *incensarios,* a complex ceramic form with Central Mexican roots found in other regions of Mesoamerica particularly in Southern Guatemala [Figs. 14 a,b].[25] In both regions, *incensarios* found primarily in burial and caches were most likely used in dedication and funerary ceremonies (Berlo 1983:46-48). The portability of the objects allowed them to travel and be easily produced and/or copied in a foreign location thus allowing for a continuation of homeland ritual practices while abroad. *Incensario* production underwent multiple artistic transformations at locations distant from Teotihuacán. Changes to form, style and iconography may reflect changes in function, patronage or ideology and may represent a shift toward localized production and consumption of incensarios. Berlo presents a stylistic analysis of *incensarios* produced in both Central Mexico and Southern Guatemala and an examination of regional or provincial styles in the hope of understanding the continuity and change in the meaning behind the objects and their cultural context (Berlo 1983:5).

[25] *Incensarios* are portable hearths that had a variety of ritual functions. These specialized ceramics are found in a variety of public, burial and domestic contexts throughout Mesoamerica.

Berlo begins her study with a formal and stylistic analysis of *incensarios* from the "source" or center of production (Teotihuacán) after a thorough historiographic analysis. Mexican *incensarios* were mass-produced with interchangeable parts and therefore exhibit both conventional features and endless variation in form and symbolism (Berlo 1983:44). She argues that flexibility of form, freedom in composition and ease of assembly allowed the rapid dissemination of the art form across Mesoamerica. Across regions and cultures, incensarios retained a remarkably "unified aesthetic that increases in complexity over time possibly in response to foreign contacts" (Berlo 1983: 94). Upon examination of *incensario* design in Southern Guatemala, Berlo discovered that the tension between convention and variation also occurred on the regional level. Outside Teotihuacán, artists maintained conventional forms but manipulated iconography or composition in a way that reflected individual preference or regional conventions of style, ideology, patronage and/or function.

Berlo builds her methodology on the work of Lee Parsons, an early proponent of the idea of a Teotihuacán horizon style that affected cultural and political changes in the Middle Classic period (400-700 AD) (Parsons 1969; Pasztory 1978). Parsons argued that within this horizon Teotihuacán heavily influenced but did not necessarily control Mesoamerican artistic production through a two-phase process of contact and regional adaptation of Teotihuacán art forms and iconography (Parsons 1969:158). The consideration of Teotihuacán influence in terms of a horizon style challenged earlier models that required direct contact, physical presence or political control to explain

stylistic change. The existence of a horizon style is difficult to prove, but the concept opened the door for consideration of more indirect modes of interaction that allowed for agency on the part of local artists and patrons. Parsons' theories were ahead of his time but ultimately weakened by his poorly defined and inconsistent methodology. He based his conclusions on problematic chronology and an unclear classification of the "pure Teotihuacán style" that allowed for differentiation and comparison with regional variations (Berlo 1983:36). Berlo attempts to stand on firmer methodological ground by beginning her dissertation with a clear presentation of the stylistic canon and iconographic conventions of both the metropolitan "center" of Teotihuacán and the provincial centers of Southern Guatemala. Only after she established a definition of the two styles did she pursue a comparison between similar objects found at the center and the provinces.

Berlo's work places the art object at the center of investigation. Her overall methodology is closely tied to Kublerian theories of style where investigation lies in clear definitions and consistent, multiple points of comparison across stylistic canons and "iconographic clusters" (Kubler 1985a:389). Berlo argues that only the systematic study of both subtle and radical changes in form, style and iconography would provide insight into the continuity and discontinuity of artistic traditions and their cultural context. In all respects, her approach places artistic choice in the hands of local artists. This is a dramatic shift from archaeological models that viewed local artists as passive receivers of culture from an outside "donor" to a perspective that embraces agency in

what was once a “recipient” culture. Furthermore, she approaches stylistic change in a way that allows for the powerful persistence of tradition even as cultures embraced new forms, styles and iconography (Berlo 1983:94-95). Berlo presents a structure for analysis in which stylistic and iconographic innovation or appropriation is not necessarily representative of a rejection of traditional aesthetic standards, a complete change in cultural context or a loss of control over local artistic production. However, the selective adoption of innovative or foreign forms and iconography may represent a disjunction in the continuum of traditional artistic production that could reveal changes in local socio-cultural activity. Overall, Berlo’s dissertation provides a strong art historical examination that is valuable both in its conclusions as well as its theoretical and methodological structure.

Andrea Stone

Clemency Coggins’ was the only formally trained art historian offering an interpretation of Mexican/Lowland Maya interaction until a 1989 article by Andrea Stone entitled “Disconnection, Foreign Insignia and Political Expansion: Teotihuacán and the Warrior Stelae of Piedras Negras”. Like Coggins before her, Stone used the visual record in an attempt to uncover the historical and political motivations behind the Maya adoption of Mexican symbolism. However, unlike Coggins, Stone structured her study around a specific theoretical framework, namely, the role of symbols in the construction of royal identity and political strategies of connection and disconnection

(Stone 1989:153-154). Stone successfully attempts to reconcile iconographic patterns in the Late Classic sculpture of Piedras Negras, Guatemala to the nature of Maya rulership in general in order to understand how foreign symbolism functioned within local artistic canons as a means of reinforcing political legitimization [Map 2; Fig. 15]. She concluded that Maya rulers adopted Mexican symbols in order to achieve the political "disconnection" from their subjects necessary to justify non-economic activities such as warfare and political expansion or assert an "exclusive dynastic heritage" (Stone 1989: 168; Fash and Fash 2000:440). Stone's work presented a clear and thorough study of the elements of Mexican iconography in Late Classic Maya art that continue to guide scholarly investigation of Mexican/Maya interaction. On a broader level, Stone also provided the initial framework for an understanding of how and why Maya rulers consciously used images to manipulate history and legitimize their socio-political activity.

For both Coggins and Stone, Mexican symbolism functioned as a dialect within the larger visual language and as a set of signs that Maya rulers adopted and manipulated for their associative meanings. Stone's work does not deal with issues of style per se, but rather broader issues of representation as foreign/Other encoded within the local visual language. Both Stone and Coggins approach the visual record, particularly iconography, much in the same way as they interpret the written or historical record. Both of their arguments depend on the creation of a "readable" or easily recognized symbol system and are not concerned with the nature or meaning of

visual cues presented through style. Both are focused on moments of discontinuity or difference as a means of tracking perceived changes in ideology. However, the images presented in this article clearly show that Late Classic rulers continued to represent themselves in the conventional style of their ancestors; yet, Stone does not explore the issue of visual continuity in the stelae of Piedras Negras. A study of both continuity/connection and discontinuity/disconnection would perhaps reveal why artists integrated foreign iconography into a system of representation that was clearly concerned with maintaining tradition.

Epigraphic Interpretations – The "Historical" Approach

Proskouriakoff and "the arrival of strangers"

In addition to art historical studies, advancements in hieroglyphic decipherment have revealed important historical information about the nature of Mexican/Maya interaction. Through her studies of the iconography and inscriptions of stelae from Tikal and Uaxactun during the 1960s, Tatiana Proskouriakoff uncovered what she called a "crucial incident" in Maya history (Proskouriakoff 1993:8-9). Although unable to decipher the event, Proskouriakoff noticed a rare repetition of a single date and "action glyph" on three separate monuments from two different sites.[26] These same sculptures

[26] The three stelae that record this date are: Uaxactun Stelae 5, 22 and Tikal Stela 31. The text of the Marcador monument, discovered at Tikal in 1984 after Proskourakoff's death, provided a fourth record of the 11 Eb event. For the most up-to-date readings of these monuments refer to Stuart (2000:472-478, 2004) and Martin and Grube (2000: 29-35).

also displayed figures wearing the earliest known examples of Mexican costume on Maya monuments. Despite the recognition of patterns in both the written and visual records, Proskouriakoff acknowledged that, “What happened on this date we can only conjecture” (Proskouriakoff 1993:7). Based on the foreign iconography and the repetitive date and names, Proskouriakoff proposed that this event (which occurred in 378 AD) might have included an “arrival of strangers” into the Maya region (Proskouriakoff 1993).

Proskouriakoff’s discovery raised many questions about earlier theories attempting to explain the nature of interaction between the Maya and Central Mexico as simply a by-product of economic activity. She called attention to a specific historical incident that although unclear in its details occurred at the same time as the accession of a new king. Curious about the coincidental timing of these two events, Proskouriakoff turned to iconographic evidence to clarify the nature of the connection. Elements of Mexican warrior costume on Tikal Stela 31 and Uaxactun Stela 5 strongly suggested a physical presence or desired association with Mexican males, possibly the “strangers” mentioned in the text [Fig. 16]. Either way, Proskouriakoff rightly asserts that, “We are not yet equipped to answer such questions, for the undeciphered inscriptions give us only the barest of hints that something momentous was happening at this time” (Proskouriakoff 1993:8-9). However, Proskouriakoff’s revelation about the historical information contained in these texts was the evidence needed to convince many scholars

of a stronger and more active relationship between the two regions that moved beyond the passive reception of ideas through trade.

Proskouriakoff's emphasis on the action of an "arrival" intimated an intrusive presence of outsiders, namely Teotihuacanos, at Tikal during the late fourth century. The inability to decipher the details of these texts only allowed Proskouriakoff (and her student Clemency Coggins) to offer suggestions about the nature of this intrusion. Their hypothesis, derived mostly from iconographic evidence, was that there might have been one or more military incursions; however, there was not enough evidence to propose Teotihuacán's political domination over Tikal. Coggins, guided by Proskouriakoff, later argued that the "strangers" that arrived at Tikal were not from Teotihuacán, but rather from a Mexicanized Kaminaljuyu (Coggins 1975; Stuart 2000:472). The specific events of 11 Eb or the greater picture of Tikal's early dynastic history would remain clouded until significant advancements in hieroglyphic decipherment during the late 1990s.

Peter Mathews, Linda Schele and David Freidel

Peter Mathews was one of the first epigraphers to probe Proskouriakoff's discovery of the events surrounding the 11 Eb date. Comparing the texts from Tikal and Uaxactun, Mathews assessed that the date represented a major moment of conflict between the two sites that may have involved a war event ultimately won by Tikal (Mathews 1985:45-46). Linda Schele and David Freidel's reading of Uaxactun Stela 5 as a conquest monument commemorating the city's defeat by Tikal reinforced

Mathews' interpretations of the 11 Eb events (Schele and Freidel 1990:146). Mathews makes no mention of the role of Teotihuacán in these events; however, Schele and Freidel suggested that Teotihuacán had an indirect role in the affairs of Maya rulers. Schele and Freidel argued that rulers appropriated aspects of Teotihuacán culture and its military ideology to legitimize and/or enhance their own political power (Stuart 2000:465). This theory was based on their interpretation of the texts and the presence of Mexican warrior iconography on associated images. There is no consideration of the style of the monuments or their surrounding architecture, all of which conform to Maya conventions. Assuming that the Maya "borrowed the costume, and presumably the rituals that with it, from the great central Mexican city, Teotihuacán", they proposed that the appropriation of Teotihuacán symbolism was integrally connected to the adoption of a new style of warfare that they called Tlaloc/Venus or "star wars" (Schele and Freidel 1990:146-149). This assumption led to the interpretation that Teotihuacán had an indirect influence on Maya culture and its ideology without any hegemonic intentions for the Maya region (Fash and Fash 2000:435).

The views of Mathews, Schele and Freidel were ultimately challenged as archaeological, visual, epigraphic and material data showed no evidence of violent conflict between Tikal and Uaxactun. Furthermore, later refinements in the decipherment of the 11 Eb monuments by David Stuart led to the conclusion that the war between Tikal and Uaxactun had not occurred. Based on Stuart's revisions, Uaxactun Stela 5 could no longer be considered a conquest monument and was in fact a

record of the arrival of Sihyaj K'ahk' or a new ruler and the resultant dynastic change at Uaxactun (Stuart 2000; Martin and Grube 2000:30). David Stuart rightly points out that the "internalist" stance taken by Mathews, Schele and Freidel was in part a reaction to previous overstatements about the role of Teotihuacán in the development of Maya society (Stuart 2000:477). However, they were also responsible for shifting the lens toward local history and the active role of rulers in interregional interaction and artistic innovation.

David Stuart

A 1996 paper (published in 2000) by David Stuart revisited Proskouriakoff's "crucial incident" and expanded upon Coggins' dynastic history. Armed with new texts and a more sophisticated understanding of the glyphs, Stuart was able to probe into the identity of the protagonists and the nature of the "crucial incident" in a way Proskouriakoff only dreamed of. Stuart first reexamines the 11 Eb event mentioned on four monuments at Tikal and two at Uaxactun. He states that Proskouriakoff correctly assessed that Tikal experienced a break in the dynastic line after the reign of Chak Tok Ich'aak I (aka Jaguar Paw) [Table 3]. Based on a new understanding of the verb *hul-iy*, "to arrive", Stuart was finally able to confirm Proskouriakoff's hunch about the physical arrival of a foreign ruler at Tikal in 378 AD at the same moment as the break in succession (Stuart 2000:477-478).[27] Stuart uses all of the known texts to reconstruct a

[27] Barbara Macleod deciphered the verb *hul-iy*, "s/he/it arrived" based on a pattern of usage recording various phases of the moon. She also noticed that the verb was used in

provisional sequence of events surrounding the 11 Eb event that included the demise of Chak Tok Ich'aak I, the arrival of Sihyaj K'ahk' and the accession of Nuun Yax Ahiin I. Stuart traces the foreign identity of Sihyaj K'ahk' and offers the suggestion that he may have been a military leader (with possible associations with Teotihuacán) who overthrew Chak Tok Ich'aak I and installed Nuun Yax Ahiin I on the throne (Stuart 2000:480-481). He also tracks the lineage of the newly installed ruler, Nuun Yax Ahiin I, to a lord (also possibly from Teotihuacán) known as Spearthrower Owl (Stuart 2000:482,488-489).[28] On the whole, Stuart views the events of 378 AD as the most "important political or military episode of early Classic Maya history when Teotihuacán established itself as a dominant force in the politics and elite culture of the Central Peten" (Stuart 2000:489).

Stuart's article also considers the role of Teotihuacán in the early dynastic history of Copan, Honduras. Glyphic evidence suggests that a major dynastic shift occurred in the early fifth century nearly fifty years after the same type of event at Tikal. Late Classic texts mentioned a divine ancestor named Yax K'uk' Mo who acceded to the throne around the same time as the dynastic shift.[29] Later decipherments

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association with marriages between local kings and foreign women (see Stuart 2000: 477).

[28] Stuart's identification of Spearthrower Owl as a historical figure and father of a Maya ruler was a significant departure from earlier interpretations that proposed the glyph represented a title or symbol associated with Teotihuacán, foreignness and/or warfare (Proskouriakoff 1993:11; Schele and Freidel 1990:156-157,449-450).

[29] Late Classic monuments that provide insight into Copan's early history include: Motmot Stone, Peccary Skull (Tomb 1), Xukpi stone, 10L-7 doorjamb, Altars I' and Q, Stelae I, J, 4, 15, 28, 63 (see Stuart 2004).

and comparative analysis revealed that Yax K'uk' Mo' was the dynastic founder of Copan (Stuart and Schele 1986; Stuart 1992; Schele 1992). Late Classic portraits of Yax K'uk' Mo' depicted him with elements of Mexican costume, leading many scholars to conclude that he must have been a Teotihuacano himself or had strong, probably familial, ties with Central Mexico and/or Kaminaljuyu (Coggins 1983, Schele 1992) [Fig. 17]. David Stuart revisits the texts from Copan with references to Yax K'uk' Mo' in order to determine his identity, the sequence of events leading up to his accession, and the nature of his relationship to Central Mexico. Stuart refined his conclusions in a second article entitled "The Beginnings of the Copan Dynasty: A Review of the Hieroglyphic and Historical Evidence" published in early 2004. The details of Stuart's findings will be discussed later in the dissertation as the primary concern of this chapter is his underlying methodology and theoretical structure.

Stuart addresses broader issues surrounding the nature of interaction between the Maya Lowlands and Central Mexico by acknowledging both sides of the externalist/internalist debate. Stuart notes that the nature of interaction probably fluctuated in relation to the political fortunes of Teotihuacán, Tikal and Copan making both models relevant to different periods in history. He argues that Early Classic hieroglyphic texts offer important,

> "...insights into Maya perceptions of a dynamic and often changing relationship with central Mexico…such sources strongly support a more "externalist" view that Teotihuacán played a very direct and even disruptive role in the political history of Maya kingdoms" (Stuart 2000:466).

However, Stuart also argues for the "internalist" side of the debate, particularly surrounding Late Classic representations of Mexicanness that appeared in the Maya region well after the decline of Teotihuacán. He makes it clear that in both instances there is a real and historic connection between the cities of Teotihuacán, Tikal and Copan. However, he also argues that Teotihuacán served a symbolic role in Maya history and culture particularly surrounding the concept of Tollan as a place of origin and means of reinforcing political power. On this point Stuart agrees with the assessment of Andrea Stone that the incorporation of a degree of Mexicanness into the image of the Maya ruler, particularly during the Late Classic, was based on "ideological manipulation" aimed at establishing disconnection from previous rulers (see Stone 1989).

Stuart deciphered the glyph *pu*, as the Maya name for Teotihuacán as "Place of Cattails" (Stuart 1994,1996,2000). The *pu* glyph appeared in multiple contexts surrounding the establishment of dynastic order at several Maya sites, including Tikal and Copan. The consistency of usage, context and apparent meaning of the term has led Stuart to identify what he calls the "'Tollan paradigm' of Mesoamerican political power and self-representation" that Maya rulers associated with dynastic origins and political foundation (Stuart 2000:466,504). The Tollan paradigm recalls a familiar Mesoamerican origin myth beginning in a distant homeland, progressing through a long journey and resulting in an arrival that establishes political order in the new location (Carrasco 1982, 2000). In some form or another, Tollan or the "place of cattails or

reeds" has a long history in Mesoamerican mythology as a primordial location associated with divine origins.[30] According to Stuart, this conceptual paradigm can be clearly tied to the historical narratives and images of civic foundation in the Maya Lowlands, particularly surrounding the events that evoke a connection with Central Mexico. Stuart argues that references to the "place of reeds", particularly next to the names and images of dynastic founders, show that the rulers of Tikal and Copan claimed a "certain Toltec [Mexican] heritage" that directly connected them to Teotihuacán, the "first ideal city, the primordial Tollan" (Stuart 2000:505-506).

Methodologically, Stuart's work draws from the epigraphic details of multiple monuments in an attempt to reconstruct the protagonists and events of the history of dynastic foundation at Tikal and Copan. Stuart is particularly interested in what text reveals about the events leading up to the changes in dynastic rule and/or political structure that took place in the fourth and fifth century. There is little focus on issues of style until his discussion of Late Classic imagery at Copan. He describes Late Classic images of the founder who is "consistently shown in a Teotihuacán mode, communicating a definite ethnic otherness for the founder." He draws a comparison with Early Classic portraits that suggest "his Mexican dress and style may be used to evoke the related notion of the primordial past, the time of 'foundation'"(Stuart 2000: 500). In this comparison, like Coggins and others, Stuart provides no definition of style

[30] According to Stuart, the Maya term p*u* is the conceptual and nominal equivalent of the Aztec term, "Tollan". Stuart and others consistently use the term "Tollan" to describe a certain place of origins as it is the dominant word within the literature.

and is in actuality discussing iconography. The term “mode” seems to be equated with style, but is not used to describe the mode of representation, but rather elements of costume or fashion. Although technically discussing symbolism and not style, Stuart indirectly and correctly asserts that style has the power to evoke memory and history. The evocative power of style was a critical element in strategies of representation that reinforced the political claims of Maya rulers. Stuart correctly asserts that Maya rulers were interested in evoking an association with Tollan, the archetypical urban center and place of political origins, as part of their strategy of political legitimation particularly at the time of foundation (Fash and Fash 2000:441; Stuart 2000:466). He argues that over time Teotihuacán became an idealized concept, an ideological paradigm through which Maya rulers could continue to define themselves and their royal lineage (Stuart 2000: 466). Beyond his theory surrounding Tollan, Stuart implies that any analysis of the role of Teotihuacán in Maya history should center on issues of perception and the manipulation of collective consciousness and memory as represented in Maya art and history - exactly what this dissertation seeks to accomplish.

Chapter Summary

As the above summary shows, there has always been a certain degree of ambiguity and debate over the nature of interaction between the Maya and Central Mexico during the Early Classic. Scholars have used visual, written and archaeological data both in isolation and collectively in their efforts to find the most objective means of analyzing the question. In the end, all roads lead to a certain degree of subjective interpretation because the complexities of cultural interaction are not easily isolated for systematic or "scientific" analysis. From the beginning, scholars have turned to the "language" of both the visual and written records as a means to reconstruct a historical and cultural narrative that can be easily read and understood in Western terms. The search for the meaning behind both iconography and hieroglyphs has neglected to address the structure behind these symbol systems or the difference in how they communicate meaning. The focus has long been on achieving an understanding of what the Maya were saying without placing much value on how they said it. Stylistic analysis has been particularly overlooked because it was considered too subjective and therefore incapable of providing verifiable data.

Our understanding of Maya political organization and dynastic history continues to evolve through continuing advancements in hieroglyphic decipherment. However, a historical understanding alone is not enough to recreate a clear picture of the nature of interaction between the Maya and Central Mexico. Historical revisions backed by further excavations and anthropological/art historical investigations, including the study

of style, would provide a more holistic view of the still murky waters of the Early Classic. However, it is also essential to review how different forms of visual communication – iconography, style, text, etc. – function both individually and in relation to each other. Maya rulers were keenly aware of the complementary nature of each of these systems and exploited all of them to represent the concepts and actions that reinforced their local and regional power. Chapter Two explores scholarly approaches to style as a unique form of communication and offers suggestions toward a comprehensive study of style. The latter half of the chapter presents an overview of the role of architecture in Maya culture and establishes the theoretical questions that serve as the foundation for the remainder of the dissertation. The underlying goal of this study is to determine the relationship between architectural style and the perception of space, particularly the spaces that display *talud-tablero* features.

CHAPTER TWO
Methodological Problems and Theoretical Approaches to "Reading" Architectural Style in the Maya Built Environment

Introduction

Throughout the twentieth century, discussions of style in both art history and anthropology revolved around the work of three theorists, Meyer Schapiro, James Ackerman, and Ernst Gombrich, all of whom wrote seminal articles on style in the 1950s and 60s. With the notable exception of George Kubler, there have been few comprehensive studies of style since the 1970s. Instead, scholars turned their attention to issues of art in context: art historians to semiotics and social history and anthropologists and archaeologists to the processual/post-processual debate. As a result, the investigation of style often took a back seat to textual and iconographic analysis, generally considered more explicit forms of visual communication. Despite this theoretical shift in both fields, style continues to be redefined and used as a valuable source of information about the relationship of individual makers to the history of making.

This chapter focuses on the nature of style and its value to the process of recovering meaning in Maya architecture particularly as an indicator of social, political and cultural change. The first half of the chapter presents a brief cross-disciplinary summary of theoretical approaches to the interpretation of style as well as offers suggestions toward a comprehensive approach to stylistic analysis. The latter half of the chapter provides the methodological and theoretical structure for the remainder of the

dissertation with particular attention to the problems inherent in the study of architectural style and its relevance to the question of Mexican/Maya interaction and cultural change during the Early Classic.

Reading Style: Reconciling Meaning and Method Across the Disciplines

The earliest efforts to establish an art historical method for the study of style focused on isolating style as an independent object of investigation. Two turn-of-the-century theorists, Alois Riegl and Heinrich Wölfflin, structured the history of art around systems of form for which style was the primary vehicle of expression (Riegl 1992 [1893]; Wölfflin 1950 [1915]). Heavily influenced by Hegelian idealism, these early studies centered on an interest in reconciling stylistic patterns with overarching metaphysical concepts (Ackerman 1963:171-2; Gombrich 1968:158-9; Iversen 1979; Preziosi 1998:112-167). Uninterested in contextual analysis, Formalist theorists viewed stylistic change as the product of a predetermined progression from primitive origins to the Classic pinnacle followed by a decadent slide into an eventual decline. Taking a cue from anthropologist Levi-Strauss, Formalist art historians also looked for structural patterns of style that fluctuated between opposing categories of formal relationships, the strongest of which were the Classical and Baroque stylistic paradigms.

In his groundbreaking 1953 article, Meyer Schapiro examined theoretical frameworks for the study of style in an effort to challenge evolutionary models of stylistic development. He argued that style, or the "constant form and sometimes

constant elements, qualities and expression in the art of an individual or a group", was not predetermined but operated as an independent system of forms and a vehicle for expression (Schapiro 1953:287). As such, both art historians and archaeologists could use style to locate objects in history and establish connections between artists, periods and cultures (Schapiro 1953:287-88). Despite Schapiro's effective argument that style was an independent system of expression, scholars continued to value style as a point of comparison and a vehicle for the study of cultural change.

Expanding on the work of Schapiro, James Ackerman explored the comparative and subjective nature of stylistic analysis. For Ackerman, style was the selective organization of forms, a system of relationships between individual elements and available resources. Meaning was not tied only to historical trends but determined by both maker and audience with both creation and perception conditioned by experience. Described as "an indispensable historical tool" for the art historian, style stood as a record of choice between qualities consciously combined to provide a structure for meaning (Ackerman 1963). Like Ackerman, Ernst Gombrich emphasized choice in the formation and perception of style. Both focused on style as a "distinctive, and therefore, recognizable way in which an artifact is made", a self-conscious, active choice of elements from an "open system" of forms that was continually being reinterpreted (Ackerman 1963:177; Gombrich 1968: 150-1,160). However, regardless of discussion of variability and aesthetic choice, the definition of style remained a readable ordering of visual elements to be studied "objectively" and employed as a tool in the revelation

of historic process. Art historians approached style as a data set used to order the development of artistic production. Mid-century anthropologists also used style as a means of ordering attributes but with an interest in uncovering broader patterns of socio-cultural behavior. Although challenged by Kubler during the late 1960s and well into the 1980s, the study of style remained a positivist method of analysis that was both ahistorical and non-contextual (Kubler 1985a; Brodsky 1980).

During the 1980s, both art historians and anthropologists began to view stylistic analysis as an external system of classification, a discursive practice that selectively defines and tracks particular attributes as they relate to fluctuating socio-cultural contexts and conventions of artistic production. Scholars like George Kubler, Michael Baxandall and Ian Hodder challenged the "objectivity" of existing methods of stylistic analysis. Early models of stylistic behavior focused on continuity as the primary structure behind the determination of historical sequences. This approach was heavily critiqued by George Kubler who stated that the study of style was "best adapted to descriptions of synchronous situations involving groups of related events, better suited to extension than duration" (Kubler 1985a:390). Kubler argued that style was not a continuous development of forms over time but an ever-changing relationship between a "bundle of components interrelated across time and space" (Kubler 1985a:386). Based on what he termed “the principle of discontinuity”, he argued that the meaning of style was not inherent within the object or the passive by-product of its place in history, but something actively prescribed by the viewer dependent on the dynamic context of

observation. In other words, meaning cannot be discovered in objects but is produced through interpretation or experience of the object, of which style is a primary informant (Ackerman 1963:165; Bal and Bryson 1991:243).

When viewing objects, the art historian is always aware of the underlying goal of historical or cultural explanation and thus looks for qualities that will inform the process of creation and perception as well as create points of comparison that reveal meaning (Baxandall 1989:5-8). Stylistic analysis involves both a cognitive response to the direct viewing of formal qualities and the subjective assessment of qualities that are peripheral to the object. According to Hodder, "objects come to have meaning as members of categories opposed to other categories, and as nodes in networks of associations and evocations" (Hodder, quoted in Helms 1996: 215-16). As such, style is continually being redefined within constructed spatio-temporal boundaries and represents an active, reciprocal and fluctuating relationship between artist, the object, and its audience. As such, stylistic analysis must consider both the process of creation and the context of perception of an object over time and space in order to uncover meaning.

Toward a Comprehensive Study of Style

Studies of style in both art history and anthropology have moved beyond chronological ordering to statements about makers and the tradition of making (Alpers 1979; Calvin n.d.). Scholars like Patricia Crown, Mary Helms, Whitney Davis and

David Summers use style as one of many threads of evidence in multivariate models that seek to qualify their theoretical goals and contextual parameters as well as incorporate variability into the study of objects (Summers 1989; Davis 1990; Helms 1993; Crown 1994). Approached as one of many solutions to a problem, scholars now view style as a language of perception with its "own internal order and expressiveness" and an independent system of visual communication that is arranged by the maker and interpreted by the viewer (Schapiro 1953:289). According to art historians George Kubler and Michael Baxandall, style is the artist's expressive language and is thus the primary authority on artistic intention - not as a psychological sense of purpose but a conscious series of choices resulting in the production of a "purposeful object" with "intentional visual interest" (Kubler 1985a:386; Baxandall 1989:15,44-45,75,131). Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of style must incorporate multiple points of inquiry including form, aesthetics and socio-historical contexts in relationship to artistic convention and innovation that inform the process of creation and perception. Analysis of both the problems and solutions undertaken in the making of objects allows the scholar to decipher stylistic information or 'visual interest' and thus provide a window into the intention or meaning behind the object. As such, stylistic analysis should attempt to peel back multiple layers of information contained in the style of an object to reveal the artistic choices that inform perception and communicate meaning. This type of analysis should be done through both a sensory observation of formal qualities, a systematic study of stylistic composition, and a subjective interpretation of the contexts that shape the experience of the object. In light of the complexity of the creative and

interpretive process, we must question which formal qualities or aesthetic choices determine the overall style of an object or structure? Furthermore, how does style as a composition of select visual elements carry information and convey the meaning of the object to the viewer?

The Evocative Power of Style

The analysis of style must begin with an analysis of the process of creation that reveals the artistic choices that produced the object under investigation. An artist or architect makes a variety of choices during the process of creation, some formal and others contextual. Because we have no written records of the creative process or personal statements by the ancient artist, we must look to the composition of visual elements across time and space as a record of artistic choice. Materials and technique are significant in the process of creation but only indirectly relate to style. Two artists working in the same medium, materials and techniques can produce objects that are distinct in their overall style. For example, both Donatello and Henry Moore created sculpture made of cast bronze but produced work that conformed to completely different stylistic conventions [Fig. 18a,b]. However, materials and techniques are active in stylistic formation as the "enablers or options for choice that [partially] control the [formal and stylistic] results" (Dondis 1986:28). In other words, the range of aesthetic choice is only as broad as the available materials and techniques that fluctuate over time and increase with innovation. Therefore, material and technical choices represent significant threads within the web of visual properties that define style and

convey meaning but they do not in and of themselves determine style.

The meaning of style is not inherent in individual formal qualities but found in the power of combined qualities to evoke associations through the experience of an object or building. Style provides a formal and sensual structure for the expression of subjective ideas, experiences, memories and values (Dondis 1986:128). As such, the composition or arrangement of forms in space carries enormous significance in the process of perception that ultimately gives style meaning. The use and reuse of certain combinations of visual qualities within similar contexts perpetuates mental connections with specific experiences, emotions, memories, places, people and historical periods. In essence, style is a metaphorical language spoken through the interrelationship of forms in time and space. Therefore, the evocative power of style must be considered in both the process of creation as a tool of artistic intention and in the process of perception as vehicle of experience and memory.

Because style operates on an intuitive level it is able to carry meanings that are independent from those carried by symbols. In other words, style and iconography are different in the way they communicate information with style acting more as metaphor than literal representation (Kubler 1985a,e). Understanding the iconography of a work is an intellectual process in which the recovery of meaning is dependent on the viewer's knowledge of specific cultural information. The response to style, however, is more instinctive with meaning coming from experience of objects that may change over time and space. One does not need to understand cultural values to identify style or

appreciate the visual associations that evoke aspects of personal and/or collective memory. For example, a viewer may look at a painting of the Madonna and Child that employs elements of the Renaissance style such as linear perspective, muted colors, calm expressions and stiff postures and not know whether it was produced during the Italian Renaissance or by an artist trying to emulate the Renaissance style [Fig. 19]. Regardless, the combination of these particular visual elements would evoke a perceptual experience of repose, order and balance that were the foundation of Renaissance philosophy. Knowledge of Renaissance culture would reveal why these values were important; however, the viewer would not necessarily need an understanding of Renaissance culture to receive and understand the sensual information conveyed through style - they would simply experience the intended response. The same viewer could look at the iconography of the same painting and not be able to understand what is being depicted, or "what it means" because they had no knowledge of Christian mythology. They might see it in generalized terms as a religious painting or a portrait but without an intellectual understanding of the painting's symbolism and its associated belief system they could not receive the entire message of the work. Iconography requires an "educated" audience as it is very specific in how it conveys information. Style, on the other hand, is a powerful tool of expression because it can carry meaning through the evocation of memory in a way that does not necessarily require an insider's point of view or an intellectual investment to understand.

Style is a powerful visual tool because the viewer is capable of reading style

purely through the sensual experience of an object or structure. However, style can also be a limited form of visual communication because it is often difficult to detach style from its original associations. Stylistic associations can be changed through the creation or addition of new combinations of visual elements or contexts that give fresh meaning to the style. For example Gothic-style architecture is identifiable by a combination of individual visual elements such as flying buttresses, stained glass, pointed arches, ribbed groin vaults, and a triforium. The juxtaposition of these architectural features creates a strong perception of verticality in the viewer. The sense of verticality created by the architectural style informed the Medieval participant's experience of the space as a religious place, specifically as a "house of God" [Fig. 20a]. In order to give new meaning to the Gothic style one had to create a new combination of visual elements and/or contexts that would in turn create a new set of associations. For example, the use of the Gothic-style on civic buildings in early 19th century London detached the style from its original association with the sacred space of the Christian church [Fig. 20b]. To a Victorian audience passing through Parliament, the Gothic-style conveyed the political nature of the space, especially its status as the seat of a powerful nation. It is important to remember, however, that the introduction of a new context and meaning for the Gothic style did not necessarily destroy or replace its original applications or associations. One could argue that government structures are their own kind of sacred space as they are experienced with a certain degree of sanctity and reverence. Furthermore, to this day, Christians continue constructing Gothic-style churches as a means of evoking the spirituality of the space within.

Style has great flexibility in its expressive potential but it is also restricted in its communicative power because it requires continued experience in order to preserve the remembered associations that determine meaning. The meaning of style could easily be forgotten without visible and experiential repetition over time. This process is similar to what happens to an understanding of iconography without the perpetuation of the oral history or textual documentation that record the narratives and symbolism that gives it meaning. One of the jobs of the art historian is to preserve and recover the meaning of style through the study of continuities and changes in the composition of stylistic elements and their associated contexts. This task is often tricky as part or all of the meaning of a style will most likely be altered by any change in context; this is particularly true for stylistic revivals. Therefore, any study of style as an indicator of cultural change must consider both the continuities and discontinuities in the process of creation and the context of experience or perception. Unlike iconography, stylistic analysis can reveal more subtle aspects of cultural change because style has the ability to create and redefine meaning through the experience of an object or structure without necessarily changing established symbol systems and supporting belief systems or ritual practices. As such, style is an effective tool in uncovering a shift in collective memory of place, values, practices, etc. when there is no evidence of drastic political, social or cultural change. The following paragraphs explore problems unique to the study of architectural style in the Maya built environment. Overall, I hope to address how architectural style, as a record of the experience of space over time, reveals information

about the manipulation of the perception of place.

Symbolic Architecture and Reading Architectural Style in the Maya Built Environment

For Maya kings, the power to build monumental architecture was more than a royal privilege; it was a divine right. The right to build fluctuated with political fortunes but always remained an integral thread in the fabric of kingship. The ruler as a builder/creator was literally and metaphorically the foundation of his polity. Architecture marked the locations for rituals and kingly duties that reinforced the ruler's divinity and position as the seat of power (Houston and Stuart 1996:290). As such, the built environment was not simply a backdrop for performance but a collection of active, living spaces dependent on experience for meaning (McAnany 1998). Architectural entities served less as containers of space (as is the norm in the Western tradition) and more as a living extension of the body of the ruler, which was itself considered a sacred space (Houston and Stuart 1997; Houston 1998b). Control over the built environment gave the ruler the power to replicate the cosmic landscape and reinforce his connections with spiritual realms through performance. As a divine presence and mediator acting within the built environment, he made visible his connection to sacred spaces and the supernatural forces contained within them.

The survival of the institution of Maya kingship required the preservation of its

supporting belief system through the performance of ritual activity over time.[31] The cyclical nature of the Maya worldview, particularly the beliefs that reinforced political succession, depended on the conservation and repetition of rituals that ensured the survival of a polity. On the whole, the visual and experiential qualities of Maya architecture reflect a conservatism that was necessary to preserve the function of certain structures as a locus for kingly activities. The Maya sought unity in their landscape that reflected the cyclical nature of time, resulting in a relative continuity of architectural form, style and function (Fash 1998:261). This is not to say that there was no variation or innovation within Maya architectural history. In fact, as this study will argue, quite the opposite is true. Maya builders proved quite adept at integrating new visual qualities, spatial arrangements and symbolic associations with traditional elements in a way that maintained consistency in the experience and meaning of architecture.

From the beginning of civic development at an unknown point during the Preclassic period, Maya rulers marked significant spaces with monumental architecture that was the site for ritual activities that reinforced their political power. Maya architects left no records of their principles of design or the artistic and cultural conventions that shaped their constructions. Therefore, the structures themselves must be the primary

[31] I fully understand and acknowledge the complexity and variety of ritual practices and institutions that ensured the survival of kingship. My comments in this chapter are not meant to diminish in any way the importance of other factors such as success in warfare, intermarriage, alliance formation, etc. For the purposes of this dissertation, however, it is necessary to pay particular attention to the role of architecture, performance and the symbolic power of space as a structural and experiential support for Maya kingship.

source for any understanding of architectural form and function within Maya culture. Modern evaluations of the built environment center on the comparative study of the greatest number of structures possible in order to allow for a more holistic exploration that includes often neglected "technical" aspects of design such as choice of material and construction technique (M.W. Jones 2000:6-7). In many instances, the process of construction or creation can reveal more about the architect's intention than the completed structure itself. The reconstruction of the construction sequence reveals the development of the structure's form and design over time and stands as a record of artistic choice (Taylor 2003:4-5). Understanding the process of construction can reveal the choices in individual and combined formal, spatial and decorative elements that informed overall style of the structure and the experience of space (Hansen 1998).

Form, style and context are inextricably linked in the process of creation and perception of Maya architecture. As such, the architectural record is rich with information that gives us a view into ancient Maya culture. Because of this direct link, most scholars have turned to the visual record as an illustration or visual proof of ideas and information drawn from the archaeological, epigraphic and ethnographic records (see for example, Coggins 1975; Fash 1994; Sharer, et al. 1999; Laporte 2003b). Very little attention has been given to the study of architectural style as a form of visual communication independent of sculptural iconography. The two terms are frequently conflated and confused with changes in iconography discussed as stylistic changes whether or not the form or composition of the object has changed at all (Coggins 1975).

As discussed above, style and iconography are unique forms of visual expression that often work in conjunction with each other to provide different layers of meaning to an object or structure. The sculpted façade often marked the name of a structure and signified its status as a specific cosmic and historic location (Houston 1998b; Martin 2001). The iconography of architectural sculpture is quite literal in its expression and can be "read" at any point in time without dependence on the experience of space to convey meaning. Architectural style also expressed the nature of the space marked by monumental structures but functioned in a different way. Unlike iconography, architectural style is a form of visual communication completely dependent on repetitive experience to preserve memory of the associations between action and place that provide meaning. Architectural style was the preferred means of visualizing metaphoric connections between the ruler and locations that exist primarily in the context of collective memory. Specifically, Maya rulers used style to evoke a spatial connection with mythological and cosmic places that could not otherwise be experienced in the local landscape or historical present. The selective integration of foreign architectural styles, including *talud-tablero,* allowed rulers to draw experiential associations between the sacred space of his body and specific locations within local and distant landscapes.

The primary theoretical goal of this dissertation is to show that Maya rulers understood the unique expressive qualities of architectural style and appreciated its ability to shape the symbolic meaning of sacred space. In addition, I hope to uncover

the relationship between the Mexican *talud-tablero* architectural style and Maya conceptions of space. In the process of perception, the use of *talud-tablero* features would have certainly evoked associations with Central Mexico and Teotihuacán. This study evaluates how and why Maya rulers at select cities used the *talud-tablero* style to manipulate aspects of collective memory that reinforced this symbolic connection. Chapter Three summarizes the architectural development of the built environment of Tikal, Uaxactun, Rio Azul and Copan as revealed in the archaeological record. Particular attention is given to continuity and change in the composition of stylistic elements, especially *talud-tablero* features, in relationship to the choices in the overall form and space of the structure or complex. Discussion and interpretation of patterns in style and context and their possible meanings will be presented in Chapter Four. I will argue that Maya rulers harnessed the power of architectural style to manipulate collective memory, particularly conceptions of place linked to origin mythology and the supernatural sanction of rulership. Specifically, I propose that rulers actively appropriated elements of the *talud-tablero* style to evoke a visible and metaphorical connection with primordial locations within distant landscapes that reinforced their claims to power.

CHAPTER THREE
Locating *Talud-Tablero* within the Early Architectural Histories of Tikal, Uaxactun, Rio Azul and Copan

Introduction

This chapter is a selective summary of the Preclassic and Early Classic architectural histories of four Lowland cities: Tikal, Uaxactun, Rio Azul and Copan [Map 2]. Each of these cities has evidence of perishable residential and ceremonial architecture dating to the earliest moments of occupation. However, monumental stone architecture did not appear in the region until approximately 500 BC, when Maya rulers began transforming the jungle around them into grand and complex cities. Over time, Maya society grew in political, social and cultural complexity reaching state-level organization governed by divine kings by at least the first century AD (Martin and Grube 2000:8). Monumental architecture is one of several cultural artifacts that "make visible" aspects of elite activity that reinforced the hierarchal social structure and validated the political power behind a prosperous state. The process of constructing grand structures required massive labor efforts, economic investment and social motivation, all supervised by a centralized government controlled by the elite class (Sharer, Fash, et al 1999:248). In the Maya region, the ruling elite developed specific architectural types and configurations that physically and conceptually separated themselves from the lower strata of society. The earliest examples of monumental architecture exist in planned complexes consisting of multiple large-scale stone structures united by a single elevated platform base. The so-called "acropolis" became a

standard architectural configuration by 250 BC and is the primary "archaeological indicator suggesting the level of sociopolitical complexity reached and the presence of a powerful group of individual lineages, commanded by one leader with sufficient power and charisma" (Valdes, Fahsen and Escobedo 1999:199). The primary function of the acropolis was as a royal burial ground that provided an active physical and symbolic connection with the history of a lineage and the accumulative spiritual power of generations of kings. The acropolis contained the most sacred spaces in the city and as such represented its political, administrative, spiritual and cultural center. Other early architectural layouts, such as the Astronomical Commemoration Complex or E Group and elaborate residential and administration structures or "palaces" often surrounded the acropolis on separate elevated platforms.[32] These complexes housed the elite and functioned as sites for the public performance of rituals that reinforced the king's political power both at home and abroad.

Because of the intimate relationship between the ruler and the sacred spaces marked by the built environment, Maya architectural design tended to be fiercely

[32] Juan Pedro Laporte and his colleagues used the term "Astronomical Commemoration Complex" to describe a particular architectural complex also known as the "E Group". The former designation provides a more general nomenclature that removes the architectural type from its original association with Group E at Uaxactun. However, I am cautious about the emphasis the term places on the presumed function of the complex. Although iconographic evidence and the orientation of the structures point to its use as an observatory and ceremonial center, there is still no hard evidence to confirm it was reserved solely for this purpose. Furthermore, the term does not take into account any change in function over time, as was the case at both Tikal and Uaxactun. Bearing in mind these concerns, I will continue to use both terms throughout the remainder of this dissertation as they are the most widely accepted.

conservative. Once established, structural forms, configurations and functions changed little over time. Continuity in design, placement and usage was essential in the preservation of politically necessary physical, spatial and conceptual connections with the ancestors, patron gods and other supernatural forces embodied by the structures.[33] The bulk of Maya architecture followed conventions of architectural style established during the first episodes of monumental construction in the Middle Preclassic. As we will see, innovations in design and finish typically appear as superficial qualities located on the exterior of the structure. The application of "foreign" architectural elements such as *talud-tablero* did not interfere with the persistence of tradition in terms of overall structural types, layout and function.

The following chapter presents a summary of the early architectural development of the civic and ceremonial centers of four Maya cities: Tikal, Uaxactun,

[33] Several scholars have published work on the significance of architecture and its relationship to sacred spaces, particularly its function as an active embodiment of supernatural forces including ancestors, cosmic forces, patron gods, etc. These studies have led to an understanding that the construction and use of monumental architecture was a critical factor in the establishment and maintenance of political power throughout Maya history. The most frequently cited sources on the symbolism and function of architecture include: Kubler 1973,1985b; Reese-Taylor 1996; Schele and Freidel 1990; McAnany 1995,1999; Stuart and Houston 1994; McAnany 1995; Fash and Fash 1996; Schele and Mathews 1998; Houston 1998a; Harrison 1999; Houston and Inomata 2001, Guernsey Kappleman 2001, Traxler 2004. Several recent studies have focused on more conceptual meanings of architecture, particularly looking at architectural signatures, structures as loci of collective memory and the physical and symbolic correlation between architecture and the human body – see: Houston and Taube 2000; Koontz, Reese-Taylor and Headrick (eds.) 2001; Martin 2001. Several of these issues will also be addressed in the forthcoming SAR volume *Kings of Stone, Bodies of Desire: Experience and Being Among the Classic Maya*, by Stephen D. Houston, David Stuart and Karl Taube.

Rio Azul and Copan. What follows is a straightforward presentation of the development of the built environment as revealed in the archaeological record. Discussion and interpretation of patterns in style and context and their possible meanings will be presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Three presents both the overall architectural style of individual structures and larger complexes in relation to a variety of individual architectural components including construction technique, materials, interior design and exterior finish. Architectural style gains meaning from the composition of its parts, therefore it is necessary to consider structures from the inside out in order to uncover patterns in construction and placement of formal elements, including both traditional Peten and *talud-tablero* features. The primary goal of this chapter is to uncover the place of *talud-tablero* architecture within the overall growth of the built environment from its origins in the Preclassic through the Early Classic period. This process necessitates a treatment of *talud-tablero* as a complex of individual architectural elements and not as a fixed or complete single form. Tracking which individual stylistic elements, including both traditional and innovative forms, are included in broader patterns of composition provides a record of artistic choice. Only an understanding of the formal and stylistic choices can open a window into the intention of the architect and the patron of the structure that gives meaning to the structure's overall style.

Architecture does not exist in isolation. Monumental structures are active spaces charged with political and spiritual power; therefore, they must be considered in relation to the objects deposited inside and surrounding the structure. Objects such as stone

monuments, ceramics and stucco sculpture not only decorated structures but also served to activate the space and commemorate the actions that took place there, keeping the structures alive through continued experience and collective memory. Therefore, architectural development is considered in relation to other cultural remains, including burials, as necessary to establish the context of structures that display *talud-tablero* features and/or contain material evidence of interaction with Central Mexico.

TIKAL

Introduction

The ancient city of Tikal is located in the center of the Peten district of Guatemala and at the geographical, political and cultural heart of the Maya Lowlands [Map 2]. Surrounded by swampland and shrouded in jungle, the natural environment encasing the city has a mysterious and almost primordial feeling to it. The sight of glowing white limestone temples piercing the roof of the jungle canopy has inspired over a century of exploration, excavation and tourism at Tikal. Tikal rivaled many modern cities as a complex, dynamic urban center with an area of at least six square miles and a cosmopolitan population estimated between 50,000 and 100,000 at its peak during the eighth century (Coe 1967:21). Tikal has one of the richest visual records in the Lowlands with over 200 stone monuments, including 43 stelae, and hundreds of buried tombs and offerings consisting of untold numbers of artifacts. The material remains of Tikal's history came to light through years of exploration and excavation beginning at the turn of the twentieth century and continue to inspire research into the

twenty-first century. Increasing sophistication in epigraphic research has resulted in continued refinements to the reconstruction of Tikal's dynastic history [Table 3]. Text and iconography have been used to piece together one of the longest and most fluctuating histories in the Maya region extending from Tikal's civic foundation by 250 BC, continuing through a fourth century collapse followed by dynastic rejuvenation in the fifth century, a 130 year hiatus beginning in the sixth century, and ultimate collapse in the ninth century (Martin and Grube 2000:26-53). Tikal's architectural history follows a similarly dynamic course involving spurts of construction and gradual remodeling permeated by sporadic episodes of destruction and abandonment (Loten 2003:233).

Artistic production at Tikal reflects continuous participation within greater Lowland Maya culture but also a desire to distinguish Tikal as a unique city (Culbert 1977:41). As such, the visual record represents both an interest in the preservation of tradition and a long history of the incorporation of innovative techniques, forms and iconography from other Peten cities and distant cultures from the Southern Highlands and Pacific Coast of Guatemala. By the third century, the visual record includes a relatively large amount of Mexican ceramic forms, iconography and elements of *talud-tablero* architecture. The appearance of what many view as "Mexican-style" objects, symbols or structures has been cited as evidence of the physical presence or political dominance of Teotihuacanos at Tikal. Scholars now realize that there is no direct equation between art style or iconography and the nature of intercultural interaction -

the reasons behind the presence of these objects is far more complex. Tikal was a significant player within the sociopolitical changes of the Early Classic period with an intrusive dynastic line gaining significant local power and regional control during the late fourth century in part as a result of apparent ties with Central Mexico. The nature of the relationship between Tikal and Teotihuacán is still under debate. However, the presence of Mexican materials and art forms such as green obsidian, cylinder tripod ceramics and *talud-tablero* architectural elements at Tikal as early as 250 BC suggest a long history of contact between the two cities (Coggins 1975; Laporte and Vega de Zea 1992).[34]

Space, time, and relevance prevent a complete summary of all of the information uncovered by over fifty years of archaeology at Tikal. The *Tikal Reports* published by the University of Pennsylvania, Clemency Coggins' 1975 dissertation, and the publications of the Proyecto Nacional de Tikal offer a complete construction sequence for the architecture and a catalogue of artifacts uncovered through excavation. Chapter One presented an overview of the methodology, theoretical framework and general findings of each of these projects and studies. What follows is a selective yet detailed description of the architectural development of the principal civic and ceremonial centers at Tikal, the North Acropolis and Mundo Perdido, from their Preclassic origins

[34] Recent interpretations of the hieroglyphic texts of Tikal suggest an intimate relationship between Tikal and Teotihuacán that likely included a military alliance and/or a dynastic connection between the ruling families of the two cities (Stuart 2000; Martin and Grube 2000). This relationship was in part responsible for the successful defeat of Chak Tok Ich'aak I and the seizure of power by the usurper, Yax Nuun Ahiin I, an event that changed the course of Tikal's history and regional political structure.

through their Early Classic expansion. The section also presents the architectural sequence of a secondary residential-ceremonial complex, Group 6C-XVI. This group is significant because it is the only known complex outside of the civic core that displays a large amount of *talud-tablero* features. Rather than recount the entire architectural history of Tikal, I have focused my attention on the structures and complexes finished with *talud-tablero* features and those that contained burials, objects, imagery and texts that shed light on the questions of interaction with Central Mexico and political/cultural change during the fourth and fifth centuries.

Site Layout and Architecture

The city of Tikal includes thousands of structures arranged in varying configurations across six square miles of tropical jungle [Map 3]. The civic/ceremonial center of the city consists of several monumental architectural groups with a construction sequence spanning the course of Maya history. Tikal's most complex architectural group and longest active burial space, the North Acropolis, sits at the geographical center of the site. To the south of the North Acropolis is the Great Plaza, a courtyard containing the bulk of Tikal's historical monuments, and the Central Acropolis, the city's primary residential, administrative and ceremonial complex during the Late Classic. The North Acropolis is connected to peripheral architecture through a series of causeways that simultaneously unify and segregate the city's nuclear core. Just southeast of the North Acropolis is the Mundo Perdido or "Lost World" complex, Tikal's oldest ceremonial district and a primary site of elite activity during the

Preclassic. Each of these architectural groups has a long construction history and contains a wealth of material remains, both significant factors in the reconstruction of Tikal's history and our understanding of architectural development. The following pages present a detailed account of the construction, composition and context of structures built at the time of civic origins in the Preclassic through periods of political upheaval in the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries. Covering such a long span of architectural development reveals patterns of stylistic conservation and innovation before, during and after the historical moments associated with dynastic change and intensive interaction with Central Mexico.

North Acropolis

With structures reaching heights of almost 500 feet and an overall area of nearly three acres, Tikal's North Acropolis is one of the grandest architectural groups in the Maya Lowlands [Fig. 4]. The North Acropolis was a complex construction project consisting of over twenty-three monumental structures built on a single platform over the course of a millennium. The structures visible today make up the final version of the acropolis as it would have stood in the ninth century. Years of excavation by the University of Pennsylvania and the Proyecto Nacional de Tikal uncovered evidence of occupation and funerary activity in the area of the North Acropolis as early as 800 BC (Coe 1990 vol.3:chart 1; Loten 2003:233). Miles of trench excavations revealed over twelve earlier constructions beneath the visible structures with the earliest dating to around 350 BC (Coe 1967:41) [Fig. 21]. Around this time a small structure (5D-sub-14-

3rd) was constructed on a low platform on the northern section of a bedrock hill (Coe 1965:7-8).[35] This structure "can be considered the real beginning of the North Acropolis architecture, for subsequent versions of the complex follow its lead in focusing on a northern building which faces south" and an elevated location (Jones 1991:105-106).

Preclassic architecture of the North Acropolis was markedly similar to structures from neighboring cities Uaxactun and El Mirador in layout, style, decoration and function. It is unclear which of these cities was the first to reorient and remodel its civic and ceremonial center, but it is clear that the three powerful cities began construction "with an eye to the works of their rivals" (Schele and Freidel 1990: 136). The North Acropolis began as a single raised platform topped by single structure facing a central plaza (Coe 1967:42) [Fig. 22]. The layout of the complex centered on Structure 5D-sub-1-2nd, which was built directly above Structure 5D-sub-14-3rd, the earliest building in the North Acropolis (Jones 1991:106) [fig. 23]. All subsequent versions of the North Acropolis retained a connection with these two structures as they eventually formed the structural core of the complex. The first acropolis platform was oriented toward the west, possibly reflecting a complementary functional relationship with the Mundo Perdido complex (Coe 1965:8-9; Laporte and Fialko 1990:64). The platform had a single access stairway leading down to a plaza floor that simultaneously

[35] The names of structures tend to vary in the literature dependent on the discussant. To avoid confusion, I refer to structures by the designation given in the excavation report. The designation is usually a combination of letters and numbers intended to label a structure and locate it in time and space. For example, 5D-86-2 would be the 2nd version of Structure #86 in area 5D (the coordinates of the structure in relation to the grid established by the site survey).

connected and segregated the complex from the more public spaces surrounding it. Structure 5D-sub-1 was remodeled between 1 AD and 200 AD and joined by six new structures, 5D-Sub-3, -4, -9, -10, -11 and –12 (Jones 1991:106) [Fig. 24].[36] The acropolis expanded in association with the entombment of three high-ranking individuals found in Burials 166, 167 and 85. The inclusion of these tombs into new and existing structures initiated the life-long function of the complex as a royal necropolis. Around the same time, architects set standards of form, layout and function for the North Acropolis that would guide construction for over a millennium. In its various incarnations, the North Acropolis always retained its original structural organization as an elevated multi-structural complex accessed by a terraced stairway providing access to a southern paved plaza (Jones 1991:107). The structures built during this early period established the visual character or style of the North Acropolis for the remainder of the Classic period. All of earliest structures had "Classic" Maya architectural features including vaulted interiors, terraces finished with apron-molding and façades decorated with painted modeled stucco sculpture (Coe and McGinn 1963:32; Coggins 1975:49,88; Culbert 1977:39). Façade iconography followed Preclassic conventions of architectural decoration through the representation of aspects of the cosmic order intended to physically and symbolically place the ruler at the center of the universe (Schele and Miller 1986; Schele and Freidel 1990; Kathryn Reese-Taylor 1996).

Burial 166 was incorporated into Structure 5D-sub 11 around 50 BC making it

[36] The tentative first century date was determined by dendochronology, stylistic analysis and relative stratigraphy (Coe and McGinn 1963:31).

the earliest known formal vaulted tomb at Tikal. The burial contained two females and twenty ceramic vessels of both local and regional styles, including imitative and imported examples of the Usulutan-ware typical of Southeastern cities (Coggins 1975:55-56; Culbert 1977:37). The tomb walls were painted red with black figures rendered in a style similar to modeled stucco and stone sculpture found at Izapa, Kaminaljuyu, Nakbe, Uaxactun, San Bartolo and other Preclassic sites (Coggins 1975:59-64; Saturno 2002). Around 25 BC, a second structure (5D-sub-9) was erected to the southeast of the earlier structure 5D-sub 1. A small vaulted tomb containing a single male skeleton was carved into the plaza in front of sub-9 and marked by the construction of a new structure, 5D-sub 10. The primary burial (Burial 167) was accompanied by offerings that included the sacrificed bodies of a female and an infant placed within a ceramic bowl and the earliest known examples of "Mexican Style" ceramics at Tikal (Coggins 1975:69-79) [Fig. 25]. The burial included local ceramic types along with Usulutan-style ceramics typical of Southeastern Guatemala and stuccoed and incised vessels similar to ceramics found at Teotihuacán, Kaminaljuyu and along the Pacific Coast.[37] All of the vessels were eclectic in their form and decoration and share more formal and symbolic qualities with Lowland and Highlands ceramics

[37] Coggins suggests the incised stucco vessels may have been imported from the Highlands since the technique and iconography are consistent with ceramic evidence from Kaminaljuyu. However, she also argues that lower quality materials and a poor level of execution suggest that the vessels were locally produced in imitation of established Highland ceramic forms and decorative styles (Coggins 1975:69-70). Regardless of the point of origin for these vessels, their presence at Tikal is proof that "Mexican" techniques of finishing ceramics with painted stucco or incised designs were well established in both the Maya Highlands and Lowlands before the *entrada* of 378 AD.

than with those from Teotihuacán. Like Early Classic examples of stuccoed and incised vessels, the vessels found in Burial 167 combine elements of technique, form and symbolism common in the ceramic traditions of Central Mexico and the Highlands suggesting a selective process of local appropriation and adaptation of foreign artistic conventions.

The incorporation of Burials 166, 167 and particularly 85 into the architecture of the newly formed North Acropolis represented the birth of Tikal's ancestral mountain as the primary burial ground for generations of rulers.[38] The sanctity and significance of the North Acropolis grew between the first and fourth centuries with the expansion of the original complex and the inclusion of new royal tombs. The end of the Preclassic was marked by an increase in new construction and massive remodeling within the

[38] Burial 85 is one of the richest burials of the Late Preclassic period (Coe 1990; Coggins 1975:79-85). Located deep within Structure 5D-sub1-1st, Burial 85 contained a single male seated and wrapped within a large ceramic bowl, a rare example of a Maya funerary bundle (Coggins 1975:80-82). The skeleton was missing a thigh-bone and its skull, possibly retained or reburied as relics (Coe and McGinn 1963:31). A small greenstone mask with inlaid eyes and teeth and a prototypical Jester God headband replaced the missing head. Similar greenstone masks were found in caches from Southern Belize, Uaxactun, Kaminaljuyu and Teotihuacán (Kidder 1947:33a; Thompson 1931:38; Pendergast 1970:9). It is unclear whether these other masks were associated with mummy bundles; however, strong similarities in the materials, form, and iconography of these stone masks suggest that the ceremonial bundling of objects and individuals was widely practiced throughout Mesoamerica.

The identity of the individual interred in Burial 85 remains unknown; however, estimates on the chronology of Tikal's dynastic sequence place the reign of Tikal's founder, Yax Ehb' Xook, in the first century making the burial a "viable contender for his tomb" (Martin and Grube 2000:26; Martin 2003). We may never have definitive proof of the identity of the man buried in this tomb; however, the wealth of his tomb and the special treatment of the body are comparable to later royal burials suggesting that he was an early ruler with power rivaling that of Classic kings (Coe and McGinn 1963:32).

North Acropolis that solidified the role of the complex as the royal necropolis (Jones 1991:108). By 250 AD, all earlier constructions had been razed and incorporated into a larger acropolis platform supporting three new structures, 5D-22, -23, and -24 (Coe 1967:43-44) [Fig. 26]. The three structures were arranged in a triadic pattern surrounding a central courtyard similar to the earlier version of the acropolis. The orientation of the triadic group was flipped in order to place the central structure (5D-22) directly above 5D-sub-1, the earliest structure of the acropolis and Burial 85, the assumed tomb of the dynastic founder [Fig. 27]. This new orientation placed great emphasis on both the vertical and the north-south horizontal axis of the acropolis (Coe 1990:340-341). Both of these axes would continue to define the layout of the acropolis as it grew over time with only the most significant burials and pyramids placed along the central axis. Each of the new structures were built using the same construction techniques as those built before them and finished with standard apron-molding façade and modeled stucco sculpture [Figs. 28,29]. All of the structures were built in direct association with new tombs preserving the original function of the structures on the acropolis as mortuary shrines. Overall, the remodeled acropolis retained the original layout, style and function of the earlier complex. However, the final version of the third century acropolis had become the grandest architectural achievement to date, "fashioned as Tikal's paramount entity...[and the] nucleus for all that occurred constructionally at this quintessential locus" (Coe 1990:344). By the end of the third century, the North Acropolis stood as the physical and spiritual center of the city and the symbolic heart of dynastic power.

5D-22 and its associated tomb (Burial 125) were part of the last construction projects within the third version of the North Acropolis.[39] The placement of Burial 125 along the north/south axis of the North Acropolis and directly above Burial 85 created a visual and symbolic connection with the individual buried beneath the center of the complex, possibly the dynastic founder Yax Ehb' Xook (Harrison 1999:68). The identity of the individual interred in Burial 125 remains a mystery, but his is one of the few burials within the North Acropolis between the first and third centuries AD. The decline in burial activity was accompanied by a cessation of new construction and a decline in the remodeling of existing structures (Jones 1991:110-111). For years scholars thought the lack of burials and construction during this period represented a political and cultural hiatus at Tikal (Coggins 1975:93-95). However, later excavations within the Mundo Perdido uncovered multiple Late Preclassic and Early Classic burials that suggest this ancient ceremonial complex replaced the North Acropolis as the primary site for elite burial until approximately 400 AD (Laporte and Vega de Zea 1992:129; Laporte and Fialko 1995:58-63).[40]

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[39] The structure itself is smaller than its predecessors and displays an unusually simple façade consisting of high-set aprons and moldings (Coe 1990:334). Burial 125, found beneath Structure 5D-22-4, is also unusual in its relatively sparse furnishings and disorganized layout. The tomb contained a single male skeleton with no visible burial goods. The shaft above the tomb was sealed with a layer of lithic fragments and contained a secondary skeleton, perhaps a sacrificial victim (Coe 1990:335-336). This is the earliest example of this type of tomb architecture at Tikal; however it is similar in construction and contents to contemporary tombs at Rio Azul, Uaxactun and Copan (Hall 1984, 1986; Adams 1987:24; Valdes and Fahsen 1995: 202-203).

[40] A similar relocation of funerary activity to an earlier ceremonial complex, also originally an E Group, occurred at nearby Uaxactun around the same time (Valdes,

Construction activity resumed in the North Acropolis around 400 AD with an intensive remodeling of the plaza floor and the addition of several new structures including the first version of the ballcourt (Jones 1991:111). The construction of Structure 5D-26 to enshrine Burial 22 marked a return to the North Acropolis as the principal site of ancestor veneration after nearly two centuries of funerary activity centered in the Mundo Perdido (Coe and Haviland 1982:39) [Fig 30]. The core of 5D-26 was integrated into the original platform and structures of the Preclassic acropolis. Earlier versions of 5D-26 were perfectly preserved and show consistency in plan, design, apron-molding finish and stucco decoration throughout the long life of the structure (Coe 1990:298-299) [Fig. 31]. Structure 5D-26 was built directly above one of the original structures of the North Acropolis, 5D-sub-3 (Coe 1990:270-271). The location of the tomb is along the north-south axis of the North Acropolis in alignment with two prominent early tombs, Burial 85 and Burial 125 [Fig. 26].[41] The tomb was

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Fahsen and Escobedo 1999:9-10). The shift in the location of the spiritual and political center of a city may represent a power struggle between different lineage groups during the Early Classic (Jones 1991:109-110). If this were the case, the occupant of Burial 125 may have been the last ruler directly descended from the founder Yax Ehb' Xook to hold power for nearly a century and half.

[41] The tomb itself is a vaulted chamber constructed in the same manner and materials as earlier tombs in the North Acropolis. Burial 22 contained a principal male skeleton accompanied by a secondary adult skeleton (Coe 1990:308). Although many of the burial goods were lost, re-deposited or destroyed, sixteen ceramic vessels survived including examples of basal-flange bowls, modeled effigy vessels and cylinder tripods (Coggins 1979a: 253). All of the ceramics are decorated with Maya iconography rendered according to Lowland stylistic conventions. One of the cylinder tripods carries some of the earliest known ceramic texts painted in black over a layer of green stucco (Coggins 1975:135). This vessel represents one of the first examples at Tikal of what have been traditionally called "Mexican-style" ceramics originally considered imports

looted at some point in the Late Classic period disturbing most of its contents (Coggins 1979a). The identity of the individual buried beneath 5D-26 remains unclear, but it is evident that he was a very important figure in the history of Tikal as he was placed on the central axis of the North Acropolis in line with the grave of the dynastic founder.[42] Burial 22 marked the new center of the North Acropolis at the point of its re-foundation after two centuries of ritual inactivity. Despite the presence of Mexican ceramic forms within the tomb, the architectural style, placement and façade decoration of the structure consciously maintained visual continuity with the earliest version of acropolis built at the time of dynastic foundation.

By the end of the fifth century, the North Acropolis had expanded beyond the spatial confines of its Preclassic configuration to include a row of three temple/pyramid structures on its lower terrace (5D-32, -33, and -34) [Fig. 32]. All of these structures display conventional architectural elements and façade design such as apron-molded terraces and stucco sculpture. 5D-34 is the earliest of these structures, built just west of the central axis of the North Acropolis [Fig. 33]. 5D-34 sits on two previous platforms, the earliest of which was constructed over a bedrock tomb chamber containing one of

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from Teotihuacán or the Southern Highlands. However, upon detailed examination the vessel form and the decorative technique could be considered Mexican in origin but the vessel's construction technique, materials, iconography and stylistic qualities all conform to Maya standards of ceramic production and decoration.

[42] Coggins analyzed ceramic style, construction sequence and associated sculpted monuments to give a relative date of the mid to late fourth century (c. 378 AD) for the burial (Coggins 1975:123). If Coggins' date is correct, the burial would be concurrent with the death of Chak Tok Ich'aak or his immediate predecessor; but we may never know who occupied Burial 22.

the most lavish burials at Tikal, Burial 10 [Fig. 34].[43] The tomb has been attributed to Yax Nuun Ahiin I based on iconographic elements on grave goods, his burial costume, the inclusion of a caiman (his namesake), and the erection of two stelae (4 and 18) in front of Temple 34 that commemorate his accession to the throne (Martin and Grube 2000: 32-33; Martin 2003:15). Yax Nuun Ahiin I was the tenth ruler of Tikal and the son of Spearthrower Owl, who may have been a lord from Teotihuacán (Stuart 2000:472, 482-488) [Table 3]. Yax Nuun Ahiin I was installed as ruler by the enigmatic Sihyaj K'ahk' in 379 AD in essence re-founding the dynasty under a new lineage that had strong connections with Central Mexico. Armed with this knowledge it is unsurprising that the burial contained a large number of ceramics of both Maya and Mexican forms decorated with symbols associated with both cultures.[44] A similar combination of Maya and Mexican elements is found on the monumental sculpture of Yax Nuun Ahiin I. The figural style of Stelae 4 and 18, both monuments commissioned by Yax Nuun Ahiin I, is traditionally Maya but a few compositional elements and the

[43] Burial 10 was sealed with a layer of flint flakes in a manner similar to the chamber containing Burial 125 constructed over a century earlier (Coe 1990:486). The tomb contained a single male skeleton extended on a wooden bier accompanied by nine individuals sacrificially killed as part of the funerary ritual (Coe 1967:45). Typical burial furniture such as stingray spines, shell jewelry, jade objects and ceramics surrounded the primary body. Atypical goods included a pyrite mirror, a scallop shell headdress, turtle shells, a headless caiman and bird skeletons (Coggins 1979a).

[44] The cylinder tripods and ring-stand bowls were produced using Mexican techniques of incising and painted stucco. As with earlier examples, the imagery on all of the cylinder tripods and ring-stand bowls depict Maya iconography sometimes in combination with Mexican symbols (Coggins 1975:146-176). All of the ceramic imagery, including elements of Mexican iconography, was rendered according to Maya stylistic conventions strongly suggesting that the vessels were produced within the Maya region, if not at Tikal itself (Harrison 1999:86).

inclusion of Mexican warrior costume distinguish the sculptures from conventional royal portraits [Fig. 35].[45] The architecture of his mortuary shrine, iconography of associated monuments and his tomb contents show his interest in maintaining tradition while certain ceramic forms and symbols emphasize his political, spiritual and possibly familial connections with Central Mexico.[46] The placement of his tomb just off to the side of the sacred north-south axis of the North Acropolis provided an element of

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[45] Stela 4 shows Yax Nuun Ahiin I wearing an open-mouthed jaguar head surrounded by a panache of feathers and a shell collar, two elements of Mexican costume (Coggins 1975:141; Proskouriakoff 1993:10). In his hands he holds the head of the Maya Jaguar God of the Underworld and what appears to be an *atlatl*, a Mexican spearthrower. Above his head floats an ancestor or god-head, typical iconography for early royal portraits. On Stela 18, Yax Nuun Ahiin I wears a Maya-style headdress but holds a Mexican style object that may be an *atlatl*.

What makes these monuments interesting is the direct substitution of Mexican symbols in locations traditionally reserved for Maya patron gods, ancestors or emblems of rulership. However, rather than a complete replacement of Mexican for Maya imagery, the two sets of symbols of political and spiritual power coexist within a traditional royal portrait. On both stelae, the ruler is shown seated on a throne in composite view with a frontal torso and profile lower body. This viewpoint allows the figure to face the viewer revealing his headdress, costume and paraphernalia. This innovative composition allowed the ruler to clearly display his Mexican connections while maintaining the integrity of Maya conventions of representation. The visual effect of Stela 4 and 18 is two-fold. On the one hand, the incorporation of Mexican elements visually and symbolically "disconnects" Yax Nuun Ahiin I from earlier rulers, distinguishing him as the new figurehead of the recently installed dynasty (Stone 1989; Borowicz 2003:224). On the other hand, the monuments retain traditional symbolic and compositional elements that maintain a visual and metaphorical connection with these same rulers. Earlier rulers incorporated foreign imagery in their royal portraits, particularly symbols and stylistic qualities common in the Highlands and Pacific Coast that reinforced their special relationship with the forces of nature. Yax Nuun Ahiin I retained some of this imagery but incorporated elements of Mexican iconography associated with military prowess, an aspect of political power that gained particular importance during the Classic period (Borowicz 2003:226).

[46] It remains unclear whether or not Yax Nuun Ahiin I was of pure Mexican blood, half Maya and half Mexican, or completely Maya. To date, there are no published studies of the bones recovered in Burial 10, generally believed to be the skeleton of Yax Nuun Ahiin I.

disconnection from earlier rulers. At the same time, however, the architecture of his mortuary shrine conforms to traditional conventions of design, style and decoration established at the time of civic foundation. The architectural legacy of Yax Nuun Ahiin I provided both continuity and discontinuity with the sacred space created and occupied by the founder, Yax Ehb' Xook. The inclusion of innovative "foreign" ceramic forms in his tomb displayed his connections with Central Mexico, but in a private context. Yax Nuun Ahiin's stelae display a similar combination of Maya and Mexican iconography depicted in a traditional Maya figural style. The mortuary shrine, the largest and most public monument to his life, is purely Maya in its construction, style, placement and function. Every aspect of the structure was designed to clearly associate Yax Nuun Ahiin I with Tikal's ancestral line and the foundation of the dynasty and not with Central Mexico.

5D-33 is one of the most extensively excavated structures at Tikal, providing archaeologists with a solid construction sequence consisting of two well-preserved but anciently damaged structures, 5D-33-2 and 5D-33-3, superimposed beneath the third and final structure, 5D-33-1 (Coe 1967:46) [Fig. 36]. The earliest platform, 5D-33-3 originally supported a superstructure (destroyed by later construction) and façade masks depicting two long-nosed gods. Both the first and second levels of construction were razed and buried within the first of two flat-topped pyramidal platforms that created the foundational core for later structures. The first platform was enclosed within a second terraced platform with a stairway that created the finished pyramidal shape of the

substructure. The second version of the structure replicated the apron-molding and sculptural program of the earlier structure. The third structure was built over 5D-33-2 during the seventh century and preserved the earlier construction completely. The layering of platforms provided structural support with a solid core and a grand, polished finish visible from the exterior. The excavations of 5D-33 have provided a valuable window into how the Maya built and remodeled their buildings over time in order to maintain a spatial and conceptual connection to the ancient sacred spaces at their core. Remodeling efforts preserved earlier structures in a way that allowed for increasingly complex architectural expressions. Structures like 5D-33 are sophisticated in their engineering, design and construction techniques and required a significant amount of materials and labor. Commenting on the complexity of the structure's history, William Coe stated, "The effort that went into such construction staggers us and makes us ponder how it was all directed and achieved, and for what ends" (Coe 1967:48).

Tunneling excavations into 5D-33 exposed three formal tombs, Burials 48, 23 and 24 and a cached monument (Stela 31). Burial 48 is the earliest and richest of the tombs located within the original version of 5D-33 (5D-33-1) [Fig. 37]. The burial chamber was cut into bedrock just in front of 5D-26 returning the architectural and symbolic focus to the central axis of the North Acropolis (Coggins 1975:187).[47] The principal male skeleton was surrounded by tomb murals with a text dating to 457 AD,

[47] This axis was also marked with Burials 125 and 22, two unidentified but highly important rulers of the fourth century and probable ancestors of the individual buried in Burial 48.

only a year after the death of Sihyaj Chan K'awiil II, making him the most likely occupant of the tomb (Coe 1947:47; Martin and Grube 2000:34-36). A variety of goods that included both Mexican and Maya ceramic forms and a stela (Stela 31) that displayed and individual wearing a Mexican warrior costume accompanied the burial (Coggins 1975; Proskouriakoff 1993) [Fig. 5,38].[48] As with the earlier Burial 10, Mexican material was encased within a conventional Maya mortuary structure and in a private context not intended for public viewing. There is a clear effort on the part of Sihyaj Chan K'awiil II to publicly affirm his connections with the dynastic line of Yax Ehb' Xook through the architectural style of his funerary temple. However, the tomb contents and the cached stela recall the symbolism and elements of the funerary assemblage that represent his father's Mexican ancestry (Coggins 1979a:265).

Mundo Perdido

The Mundo Perdido or "Lost World" is an ancient architectural district at Tikal located on the western limits of the civic and ceremonial center of the city [Map 3, Fig. 6]. The Mundo Perdido was originally explored, excavated and recorded in 1964 by the

[48] The tomb also contained two secondary male skeletons with their heads and hands removed, mimicking the incorporation of sacrificial victims in Burial 10 (Coggins 1975:189). The burial chamber included a wealth of goods including textiles, shell, stingray spines, green and gray obsidian and animal bones. Over thirty ceramic objects, including some of the most luxurious ceramics ever found, surrounded the skeleton. The ceramic offering included both Maya-style basal-flange bowls and Mexican cylinder tripod and ring-stand bowl forms (Coggins 1975:187-198). The cylinder tripods and ring-stand bowls displayed elements of Mexican iconography, particularly the skull and butterfly symbols associated with warriors (Coggins 1979b).

Tikal Project which viewed the complex as a "structural peculiarity" that might be a "huge Preclassic ritual development" comparable to the North Acropolis (Coe and Haviland 1982:37-39). Extensive excavation by the Proyecto Nacional de Tikal during the 1980s confirmed the suspicions of the Tikal Project by uncovering a complex construction sequence and a wealth of material remains representing a long history of use that began during the Middle Preclassic, flourished at the start of the Early Classic and endured through the Terminal Classic (Laporte and Fialko 1990:33; Laporte and Vega de Zea 1992:127).

The Mundo Perdido may have been occupied as early as 700 BC but there is no evidence of monumental architecture before 500 BC (Laporte and Fialko 1990:33). The earliest public construction in the Mundo Perdido, built around 500 BC, was a small radial pyramid, the first version of Structure 5C-54 (5C-54-1), and a long rectangular platform (5D-84/88-2) aligned along a strict east-west axis (Laporte and Vega de Zea 1992:127) [Fig. 39]. These structures were similar in architectural form, style and orientation to the earliest architectural groups at Uaxactun (Group E) and other Preclassic sites suggesting that together they functioned as an Astronomical Commemorative Complex or E Group (Schele and Freidel 1990:136; Laporte and Fialko 1990:35). *Alfardas*, or balustrades, flanked the stairways of the original version of the central pyramid (Laporte and Fialko 1990:46). This architectural element is unusual for architecture of this period but was a common feature on *talud-tablero* architecture in Central Mexico. Although it is only a single feature of a larger stylistic

complex, Laporte cites the use of *alfardas* on the earliest structure in the Mundo Perdido as evidence that Maya architects had a long history of experimenting with elements of the *talud-tablero* style (Laporte and Fialko 1990:46). The complex was expanded and remodeled between 500 and 250 BC to include a larger pyramid and platform (5C-54-2, 5D-84/88-2) but without any change in layout, style or function (Laporte and Vega de Zea 1992:127). The earliest known burials from the Mundo Perdido date to this period.[49] Both burials were relatively simple and contained no furniture suggesting that they were dedicatory offerings and not formal entombments (Laporte and Fialko 1990:35).[50]

The structures of the Mundo Perdido grew in size and visual complexity with renovations undertaken between 250-100 BC. The first and second versions of Structure 5C-54 had little façade decoration, only an apron-molded finish on the terraces and four radial stairways (Laporte and Fialko 1990:37) [Fig. 40].[51] 5C-54-3 had a more ornate façade with large stucco masks flanking the directional stairways in a pattern common

[49] The two burials (PNT-002 and -003) were found just below the summit of 5C-49 along the east-west axis.

[50] All of the skeletons buried within these structures had evidence of cranial deformation and dental inlays, suggesting that they were ethnically Maya and of an elite rank (Laporte and Fialko 1990:35). However, the informality of these early burials may reflect the individual's status as a sacrificial victim possibly associated with a rival lineage either from Tikal or another city. Late Preclassic sculptural iconography clearly shows that Maya rulers took and killed captives by this early date.

[51] Only the east and west façades had functional stairways that provided access to the summit from the plaza floor (Laporte and Fialko 1990:37). This architectural feature may have been another, more visible, marker of the east-west axis that dominated the landscape of the Mundo Perdido.

to the acropolis and E Group architecture of most Preclassic cities.[52] The new façade also displayed a secondary set of stairways that divided the four sides into multiple segments. These auxiliary stairways were probably just decorative, as they provided no valuable access to or from the structure. Two more burials (PNT-001 and -004), this time with offerings, were placed beneath these auxiliary stairs along the east-west axis of the complex (Laporte and Fialko 1990:35). The informality of the burial and the low quantity and quality of the associated artifacts suggests that like the earlier burials these were most likely human offerings commemorating the completion of the new structure (Harrison 1999:57). The earliest version of the causeway connecting the Mundo Perdido to the North Acropolis was also built during this period. The construction of the causeway suggests that the Mundo Perdido maintained a certain degree of ritual activity and symbolic importance in relation to the North Acropolis during the Late Preclassic.

The fourth renovation of the complex also occurred at some point between 250 and 100 BC and involved a massive enlargement of the primary pyramid (5C-54-4) and the addition of three superstructures to the eastern platform (5D-84/88-3) (Laporte and

[52] The sculptures are badly damaged but reveal enough to identify them as jaguar masks similar to those found on Structure E-VII-sub at Uaxactun. Scholars have interpreted these masks as solar or celestial deities that associate this structural form with the observance and commemoration of solar activity (Schele and Freidel 1990; Valdes 1992b; Harrison 1999:56). The axial placement of important structures and material offerings along the east-west axis, the directions symbolically linked to the daily path of the sun, is evidence that this complex probably at least functioned at least in part as a solar observatory. Iconographic evidence and the orientation of the structures point to its use as an observatory and ceremonial center; however, there is still no hard evidence to confirm E Groups were reserved solely for this purpose (see footnote #32).

Vega de Zea 1992:127-128) [Fig. 41].[53] Once completed, this structural arrangement defined the architectural layout and visual character of the complex for the remainder of its existence.

The first version of a second pyramid structure, 5C-49-1, was also built during the Late Preclassic at some point between 100 and 250 AD [Fig. 42].[54] The structure is similar in its pyramidal form and construction technique to Structure 5C-54 but different in its orientation and exterior appearance. 5C-49-1 had a single frontal stairway flanked by *alfardas* that placed the visual focus and primary access on the south face of the structure. This structural orientation had more in common with the temple architecture of the North Acropolis than the radial pyramid of the Mundo Perdido. The use of this structural form was typically reserved for funerary architecture (as in the North Acropolis) and therefore may reflect a difference in function between 5C-49 and 5C-54.[55] There was also a marked difference in the façade design of the two

[53] The construction of the central temple (5D-86) included the addition of large jaguar masks that aligned with those on the primary pyramid along the east-west axis of the complex (Laporte and Fialko 1990:35). Following the pattern of earlier remodeling efforts, two more plain burials (PNT-020 and -032) were placed along this same axis (Laporte and Vega de Zea 1992:127).

[54] Dating the earliest version of construction is difficult due to the lack of construction fill. Laporte provides this chronological range based on the stratigraphy of the plaza floor and structural similarities with the earliest construction phase of 5C-54 that included ceramic material typical of the Cauac ceramic phase (Laporte 1987:289).

[55] To date the core of Structure 5C-49 has not been excavated, therefore, the exact function of the structure remains unknown. However, similar pyramidal construction within an E Group complex occurred around the same time at Uaxactun in association with a formal elite burial. In addition, the structure's overall form strongly resembles the funerary pyramids of the North Acropolis it remains a possibility that Structure 5C-49 was designed to be a mortuary shrine.

largest Mundo Perdido pyramids. The front and sides of the substructure of Structure 5C-49-1 consisted of three terraces finished by sloping *taluds* executed at varying heights and angles (Laporte 1987:285-289). The structural platform joined the upper terrace in a way that mimicked the *talud* form, giving an overall appearance of a single *talud-tablero* platform resting on two terraces (Laporte 1992:323). This structure does not display a *talud-tablero* combination on each individual terrace or around the entire structure, as was the convention at Teotihuacán. The façade of 5C-49-1 was relatively plain as there were no *tablero* boundary markers, or frames, to provide visual interest or contain imagery (Laporte 1987:305).

The Mundo Perdido experienced a wave of remodeling and new construction between 250 and 300 AD that increased the spatial segregation of the complex [Fig. 43]. Most of the new structures displayed traditional façades but often in combination with elements of *talud-tablero*. Four new buildings were built to the northeast and south of the complex (5D-77-1, 5D-82-1, 6C-25-1 and 6D-11-1) transforming the open spaces surrounding the original group into enclosed plazas (Laporte and Fialko 1990:36). The fifth version of the central pyramid, 5C-54-5, included two new terraces that increased the overall height of the pyramid to 31 meters making it the highest structure at Tikal (Laporte and Fialko 1990:37; Laporte 2003a,b) [Figs. 44,45].[56] The apron-molding along the exterior terraces was replaced by large-scale *tableros* with inset frames (Laporte and Fialko 1990:46). The remodeling of 5C-54 was concurrent with the

[56] Keeping with tradition, the remodeling included two cached offerings (PNT-001, -002) along the east-west axis.

construction of 5C-49-1, the first structure in the Mundo Perdido to exhibit *talud-tablero* elements on a large scale. The addition of *tableros* to the façade of the central pyramid updated the appearance of the ancient structure to provide a degree of visual continuity between all of the structures in the complex. However, these additions did not replace the more traditional architectural features with roots in the earliest versions of the structure (Laporte 2003a:288). The façade continued to display large stucco masks and apron-molding on its upper terraces preserving a large portion of the Preclassic style of the structure.

The East Platform was enlarged during this period but with a marked emphasis on the central structure (5D-86-5), which received a central stairway providing access to the plaza floor. The renovation of 5D-86-5 coincided with the construction of the earliest vaulted tomb in the Mundo Perdido.[57] The remodeling of 5D-86 included the construction of a small radial platform in front of the structure along the central east-west axis of complex. The function of the platform is unknown, but posthole placement suggests that it may have supported a stela or standard surrounded by a perishable structure (Laporte and Fialko 1990:40). Within the platform was a mass sacrificial burial containing 16 or 17 men, women and children. The context of this group sacrifice

[57] The burial (PNT-021) included jade, shell and ceramic material typical of the Cimi ceramic complex (Laporte and Fialko 1990:40). The tomb and its contents were partially destroyed by the time of the sixth phase of construction after 300 AD leaving few osteological remains. The identity of the individual interred in PNT-021 remains unknown, but Laporte proposes he was the ruler or ranking member in the line of Chak Tok Ich'aak I responsible for seizing power from the lineage of Yax Ehb' Xook (Laporte 1990:40-41).

is unclear but might be related to the mural iconography associated with the subsequent construction 5D-86-6. The interior of the superstructure contained a mural depicting five nude and bound figures kneeling in a gesture of submission, presumably about to be sacrificed (Laporte and Vega de Zea 1992:132) [Fig. 46].[58] Between 350 and 378 AD, the three superstructures of the East Platform were remodeled to accommodate a number of high-ranking burials (PNT-019, -024, -025, -026, -062, -063) all located along the east-west axis of their respective structures (Laporte and Fialko 1990:42; Laporte and Vega de Zea 1992:129).[59] Around the same time (c. 400 AD), the platform base of the East Platform received a *talud-tablero* finish that visually coordinated with its pyramidal counterpart, 5C-54-5 (Laporte 1992:323).

Three subsequent remodelings of the structure (5C-49-2/3/4) built between 300

[58]On their backs are symbols that may have identified the figures by their personal names or place of origin. These figures are remarkably similar in iconography, style and composition to those found on three round altars within Structure A-3-sub1 at Rio Azul (Adams 1999:138) (see also footnote #89). The exact dates of these sculptures are unclear but are probably within fifty years of each other. Laporte has given the Tikal frieze a tentative date of 300-350 AD in line with ceramics found in the construction fill of 5D-86-6 (Laporte and Fialko 1990:42). This tentative date places the imagery in line with the events of the late fourth century that also involved a dynastic shift overseen by Siyaj K'ak'. Curiously, both captive friezes appear in association with the construction of a tomb that converted an ancient structure into a mortuary shrine.

[59] The tombs included male, female and infant skeletons surrounded by a variety of traditional offerings. The contents of the later tombs (particularly PNT-026 and -063) are similar to the funerary assemblages of the North Acropolis, especially Burial 22 (Laporte and Fialko 1987:156-157). Ceramic material consisted of Lowland forms and iconography with no known examples of cylinder tripods or other Mexican ceramic forms (Laporte and Fialko 1990:42). The remains of one vessel and several figurines display a stucco finish, further evidence that Mexican decorative techniques were in use at Tikal before the historical moment of the *entrada* of 378 AD (Laporte and Fialko 1987:142-188).

and 400 AD began to incorporate *talud-tablero* elements in more complex combinations (Laporte 1987:289-92,308) [Fig. 47]. The façades of Structures 5C-49-2, 5C-49-3 and 5C-49-4 displayed a *tablero* feature with decorative frame element in association with each of the sloping *talud* terraces (Laporte 1992:323). Interestingly, the talud-tablero façade only appeared on the southern face of the structure. When viewed from the front, 5C-49 had the appearance of a Mexican *talud-tablero* pyramid but preserved the Maya stylistic qualities of the original construction on the rear of the pyramid. The next version (5C-49-5) constructed around 500 AD most closely resembles the Teotihuacán standard in its complete form, overall distribution and structural proportion - but again only on its uppermost levels (Laporte 1987:293-94,309) [Fig. 8]. However, significant formal changes to the front and rear façades and the addition of a three-roomed superstructure also drew a visual connection with Preclassic Maya architecture (Laporte 1987:294). Structure 5C-49-5 retained the central stairway but lost the balustrades found on earlier versions, giving it a more traditionally Maya approach. The top three terraces and superior platform were finished with *talud-tablero* on all four sides. Lower terraces, however, either retained the earlier sloping *taluds* or changed to an apron-molding finish (Laporte 1987:293-294). Over time, *talud-tablero* features only appeared on the lowest terraces of the structure, perhaps as a visual reminder of earlier structures and the space contained within the ancient platform.

Both the Mundo Perdido and the North Acropolis show evidence of expansion, remodeling and ritual activity between 250 and 400 AD, suggesting that both areas were

active ceremonial centers at the start of the Early Classic (Martin and Grube 2000:28). However, after 250 AD the Mundo Perdido began to include elite burials, representing a radical and unique alteration to the function of the complex (Laporte and Vega de Zea 1992:128-129). The Astronomical Commemorative Complex of the Mundo Perdido "ìs the only example of this type of architectural group known so far to have associated royal tombs" (Laporte and Fialko 1990:35). Curiously, as the Mundo Perdido began to include elite burials, the practice came to an apparent halt in the North Acropolis (Culbert 1977:39). For nearly one hundred and fifty years the Mundo Perdido replaced the North Acropolis as the principal sacred space occupied by the ancestors. At Tikal, the "re-centering" of the city involved an increased visual presence of *talud-tablero* elements on the façades of new and existing structures in the Mundo Perdido. Over the next 150 years, *talud-tablero* elements appeared in a variety of combinations on the ancient pyramid, 5C-54, a new pyramid (5C-49), the East Platform and the three other constructions (Structures 5C-51-3/4, 5C-52 1/2, and 6C-24-2/3) (Laporte and Fialko 1990:46). The construction of Temple 26 in association with Burial 22 around 400 AD marked a return to the North Acropolis as the principal royal burial ground (Coe and Haviland 1982:39). Although construction slowed in the Mundo Perdido after this date, and the complex no longer received high-ranking burials, it continued as an active ceremonial space well into the Classic period (Laporte and Fialko 1995:73).

Group 6C-XVI

Group 6C-XVI is a large residential complex located approximately 350 meters south of the Mundo Perdido [Fig. 7]. The complex has a long architectural history consisting of twenty-one construction episodes dating from the beginning of the Early Classic and running through the Late Classic (300-600 AD) (Laporte 1992:322). The group consists of a variety of structures including pyramids, platforms, plazas and domestic structures that characterize the complex as "specialized residential complex", or what many call an elite "palace", with multiple functions as an important administrative, residential and ceremonial location (Laporte 2003:295-297). The basic structural pattern of the group remained the same for nearly forty-five years when it was eventually covered in its entirety by new construction that may have followed a change in occupation and/or function of the complex (Laporte 1992:323).

Little is known about the visual character or function of the earliest versions of Group 6C-XVI and whether or not the complex was in use during the Late Preclassic. Group 6C-XVI apparently gained importance between 350 and 375 AD in conjunction with a marked surge in construction in association with multiple burials, caches and other deposits (Laporte and Fialko 1990:46) [Figs. 48,49].[60] Three platforms were added to the group during this period (sub-04, -17 and –26), all finished with *talud-tablero* features in a variety of combinations and locations. A traditional apron-molding

[60] Offerings included one burial (PNT-160), four caches (PNT-37,-45,-67,-71) and two problematic deposits (PNT-019,-032) (Laporte and Fialko 1990:46).

finish dominated the platform façade of Structure Sub-04-1 (Laporte 1992:322). However, the façade also incorporated some *talud-tablero* features on the sides of the substructure up to the base of the molding (Laporte and Fialko 1990:48). Modeled stucco sculpture depicting a series of figures and masks decorated the space within the *tablero* frame [Fig. 50].[61] Structure Sub-17, built just east of Sub-04, displayed a similar combination of *talud-tablero* features and apron-moldings but on all four sides of the substructure (Laporte 1987:274-75) [Fig. 51]. Excavations of Sub-17 revealed nine levels of construction exhibiting different combinations of *talud-tablero* elements always found in association with conventional Maya architectural forms. Both structures had plain front stairways without the *alfardas* typical of Teotihuacán's *talud-tablero* architecture (Laporte 1987:270-275; Laporte 1992:322). Similar formal experimentation was found on Sub-26, a large and complex structure located on the northeastern side of the principal patio group of Group 6C-XVI [Fig. 52].[62] Sub-26 was the only building in the group to have all of the diagnostic features of the talud-tablero style as employed at Teotihuacán: *taluds* and *tableros* on all four sides and a stairway framed by balustrades with cornices (the only known example of this type of staircase at

[61] Laporte does not discuss the style of the figures, but states that the masks resemble the Sun God (Laporte 1992:322). Images of the masks are not published, but based on Laporte's iconographic assessment and similar sculpture within *tablero* frames, it is plausible to assume the façade sculpture of Sub-04 represented Maya iconography rendered according to local conventions of figural style.

[62] Sub-26 was constructed in association with an elite burial (PNT-160) commemorated by a cached offering (Cache PNT-047). Ceramic material suggests a date of interment between 300 and 400 AD, making Group 6C-XVI an active funerary location around the same time as the Mundo Perdido received its last tomb (Laporte and Fialko 1990:35).

Tikal) (Laporte 1987:277-279). However, continual modification to the proportion, angle and scale of these architectural features suggests that the *talud-tablero* stylistic complex was never accepted in the complete standardized form found at Teotihuacán but selectively appropriated into Maya architectural conventions.

Several structures dating to this phase of construction were decorated with sculpture and murals depicting aspects of the ballgame (Laporte 1992:324-325) [Figs. 53,54].[63] On these and other structures, a Mexican architectural element - the *talud* boundary, served as a decorative frame for depictions of themes common in Maya iconography rendered in conventional Maya figural style. This combination of a Mexican form with Maya iconography was also common in ceramics produced at this

[63] Laporte has proposed that the predominance of ballgame imagery within Group 6C-XVI suggests that, "...this was a group occupied by a segment of the Ma' Cuch [aka Siyaj K'ak] lineage that was specifically dedicated to this activity, functioning perhaps as a retreat for preparation and initiation rituals, for training in the particulars of the ballgame, as well as for promotion of the event" (Laporte 1990: 56).

I would like to propose another possible interpretation for the mural imagery. The murals may record the role of the ballgame in the defeat of Chak Tok Ich'aak I and his ritual sacrifice, a performance critical to proving the political legitimacy of the replacement dynasty. This scenario would be in line with the events recorded on the Marcador, and may depict the public performances that would have placed the military victory of Siyaj K'ak and Yax Nuun Ahiin I in the context of the cycle of life and death and the succession of power. The sacrificial death of Chak Tok Ich'aak, validated by his loss of the ballgame, would allow for the rebirth of the Maize God reincarnated in the person of the new ruler, Yax Nuun Ahiin I. This interpretation would be in line with Laporte's proposed dating of 6C-XVI and its function as a location for ballgame activity. It also considered the nature of the frame as a Maya convention for locating an activity within a specific location. As I argue in Chapter Four, the *talud* frame may have been a symbolic counterpart to the quatrefoil frame. Both frames would have placed an activity in the space of the underworld, however, the *talud* might have referenced a place located either in the distant sacred landscape of Central Mexico or recreated locally at Tikal.

time suggesting that selectivity and syncretism in the appropriation of foreign artistic conventions existed across all media (Pasztory 1978).

Group 6C-XVI expanded after 378 AD to include several new structures (Sub-57, -48. -50), all of which carry *talud-tablero* features on their substructures [Fig. 55a,b]. Structure sub-57, a small platform displayed a recessed *tablero* that framed three painted low relief sculptures of seated figures (Laporte and Fialko 1990:48).[64] Sub-48, located in the center of the north plaza of the group was finished with a *talud-tablero* façade [Fig. 56]. Cached within this tiny structure was the so-called "Marcador", a stone battle standard with a text commemorating the events surrounding 378 AD (Laporte 1992:323; Stuart 2000) [Fig.57].[65] Construction increased briefly in Group 6C-XVI after the interment of the Marcador around 435 AD. The final construction phases built between 400 and 500 AD covered all earlier structures, completely removed their *talud-*

[64] Laporte does not describe the style of these figures and they are not published; however, his description suggests that the figures were similar to those found on Sub-21 and Sub-39, all of which were rendered according to Maya conventions of figural style. The subject of the painted frieze remains unclear.

[65] The standard is of a similar form to stone effigy banners found at Teotihuacán and along the Gulf Coast and displays elements of Mexican iconography. At the center of the monument is the name glyph of Spearthrower Owl, the father of Yax Nuun Ahiin I. This side also displays a carving of two individuals united by their Mexican headdresses, nosepieces and earflares. Just below the faces is an emblem in the shape of a "Mexican Year Sign". On the other side is a motif that includes three dots and a curved line, similar to abstract representations of the Mexican rain god, Tlaloc (Berlo 1983). Feathers surround the central motif in a way that evokes the head of the Mexican war god, the Feathered Serpent, and the shields of Mexican warriors (Laporte 1992:325-326). The text of the monument is broken down into two panels of thirty-six glyphs on each side that record the events surrounding the *entrada* and the installation of Yax Nuun Ahiin I. A thorough decipherment of the Marcador text and its place in Tikal's history can be found in Stuart (2000a).

tablero elements and displayed a more traditional architectural style (Laporte 1987:276,279) [Figs. 58,59]. Structures such as Sub-50 were larger in size and more ostentatious in decoration than earlier structures in 6C-XVI. Sub-87 was built during the final phase of construction to cover all earlier structures thereby consolidating the space into a single architectural element [Fig. 60]. Despite the loss of their *talud-tablero* finish, all of the later structures of 6C-XVI contained rich burials and cached offerings that continued to contain both local and foreign ceramic forms and materials.[66]

The exact identity of the occupants of Group 6C-XVI and its particular function in the context of Tikal's built environment remains unclear. Based on the presence of *talud-tablero* architecture, Laporte suggested that the complex was home to the lineage of Sihyaj K'ahk' (Laporte and Fialko 1990:46). However, this theory is no longer plausible as advances in epigraphic decipherment revealed that Sihyaj K'ahk' was never a ruler at Tikal and was not a member of a local lineage, but may have been a general from Teotihuacán (Martin 1999; Martin and Grube 2000:31; Stuart 2000, 2004). Architectural evidence also refutes this initial theory because Group 6C-XVI shows evidence of *talud-tablero* elements dating to the first construction phase circa 300-350 AD well before the arrival of Sihyaj K'ahk' in 378 AD. I believe, however, that Laporte is correct in associating the complex with the political faction in competition with Chak Tok Ich'aak I as the artifacts and texts found in Group 6C-XVI commemorate the

[66] One of these burials, PNT-174, contained two skeletons and several skulls that suggest sacrifice took place in this complex, perhaps in relation to the ballgame. (Laporte and Fialko 1990:60-62).

events surrounding the political coup of the late fourth century. Therefore, it is more likely that the complex was built and used by the family of the ruler installed by Sihyaj K'ahk', Yax Nuun Ahiin I, who may have been the offspring of a marriage between the Mexican lord, Spearthrower Owl, and a Tikal lady (Martin and Grube 2000:31). The *talud-tablero* architectural style has a history in the complex (and the Mundo Perdido) that dates before the "arrival of strangers" in the late fourth century. As such, the appropriation of *talud-tablero* elements must have been a product of local artistic choice and not a style imposed from the outside in association with the presence of Mexicans.

UAXACTUN

Introduction

The site of Uaxactun, Guatemala is located approximately 12 miles north of Tikal on the western border of a swamp surrounded by multiple lakes, rivers and *bajos* [Maps 2,4]. This location was beneficial for commercial and cultural interaction and exchange with other cities both within and outside the Lowlands, one factor that led to the growth and longevity of the city (Valdes, Fahsen, and Escobedo 1999). Archaeological evidence suggests that Uaxactun was a seat of political power from the Late Preclassic through the Late Classic at times rivaling Tikal in wealth and influence. Uaxactun experienced its greatest prosperity and urban expansion during the Early Classic (250-550 AD), particularly after 378 AD when it fell under the political control of Tikal (Martin and Grube 2000). There is evidence of occupation and the continuity of dynastic power during the Late Classic. However, Uaxactun never fully recovered from

a hiatus during the seventh century and slowly declined in power until it ultimately collapsed in the late ninth century. Due to a long excavation history and a fair amount of material remains, Uaxactun has consistently been an important source of information for efforts to reconstruct the events of the Early Classic period and the relationship between the Maya and Central Mexico.

Several Tombs at Uaxactun contained Mexican ceramic forms with some decorated with Mexican techniques including stucco and incised designs. There are also several examples of Mexican iconography on both monumental sculpture and ceramics. Curiously, there are no known examples of *talud-tablero* architecture despite the presence of Mexican ceramic forms and sculptural iconography. Both Tikal and Copan have material evidence of interaction with Central Mexico that includes ceramic forms, iconographic and textual symbols, and *talud-tablero* architectural elements. Therefore, the lack of *talud-tablero* at Uaxactun is a clear record that Maya rulers were selective in their adoption of elements of the Mexican artistic tradition. This process is made even more interesting after the takeover of Tikal, in the sense that the architecture of Uaxactun began to resemble the architecture of Tikal, particularly the structures of the great city's ancestral mountain, the North Acropolis. However, there are no structural references to Central Mexico or even the architectural groups of Tikal that contained *talud-tablero* features. The early architectural development of Uaxactun is an important record of the choices made by local rulers about architectural style and by extension the experience and meaning of the built environment.

Site Layout and Architecture

The urban core of Uaxactun consists of eight principal architectural groups (A-H) constructed from the Late Preclassic through the Late Classic periods (500 BC-900 AD).[67] The architecture of Uaxactun is dominated by structures that follow Lowland conventions of construction technique, materials, sculptural iconography, interior space and façade design. As stated earlier, there are no known examples of *talud-tablero* style architecture at Uaxactun (Laporte 1989b:634). However, Uaxactun was the site of significant innovations in architectural design during the Late Preclassic including the earliest known examples of the triadic group, astronomical commemoration complex (E Group), and formal acropolis in the Maya Lowlands (Laporte 1989b:625). These three architectural types continued to mark significant spaces and locations of royal activity during the Classic period.

Years of excavation have revealed that four architectural groups, Groups E, H, A and B, were the principal loci of elite activity at Uaxactun.[68] Excavations at all four groups facilitated the establishment of a construction sequence and relative chronology for both individual complexes and the site as a whole. Grander and more permanent

[67] Material evidence from Group E suggests that initial construction dates to between 500 and 350 BC, although the city must have existed for quite sometime before the construction of monumental architecture (Valdes 1986b:126). Stela 12 records the last evidence of events in Uaxactun's history with a long count date of 10.3.0.0.0 (889 AD) (Martin and Grube 2000:30).

[68] The principal sources on the archaeology of Uaxactun include: Morley 1938; Ricketson and Ricketson 1937; R.E. Smith 1937, 1955; A.L. Smith 1950; Valdes 1986a,b,1989a-c.

masonry architecture replaced independent residential and ceremonial structures made from perishable materials at some point during the Late Preclassic (Valdes 1986b:126). Early architectural development centered on two distinct groups with divergent functions. Group E is the oldest architectural complex and ceremonial center at Uaxactun first constructed during the Late Preclassic. Group E was briefly abandoned in favor of Group H, a mini-acropolis occupied for nearly fifty years. The construction of Groups E and H resulted in a consolidation of elite space and ceremonial activity into formal architectural complexes. Groups E and H share features and functions with Preclassic architectural groups at Tikal, Cerros, Nakbe and El Mirador, suggesting that Uaxactun was an independent power but also participated in the broader cultural sphere of the Maya Lowlands (Valdes 1986b:126; Valdes and Fahsen 1995:197). Group H was abandoned by 250 AD; however, Group E continued to be an important location into the Early Classic. By the turn of the fourth century, Groups A and B had replaced Group E as the primary location of elite activity, an arrangement that would remain for the duration of the Classic period. The compact layout of Group A represented a further consolidation and segregation of elite space as this group contained residential, ceremonial and mortuary architecture.

Group E

Group E is a temple-pyramid complex consisting of eleven structures including a triadic group, three independent structures and an Astronomical Commemoration Complex or E Group [Fig. 61]. The group is located in the eastern sector of Uaxactun,

approximately 1000m southeast of the principal plaza of Group A. Group E contains the earliest monumental masonry architecture at Uaxactun and one of the earliest examples of a formal acropolis in the Lowlands (Valdes 1986b:126). Built during the Late Preclassic, the first phase of construction, the so-called *plaza hundida*, consists of three medium-sized stone structures resting on a large platform base with a sunken stairway providing access to the plaza below (Valdes and Fahsen 1995:199; Rosal, et al. 1993) [Fig. 62]. The platform base has rounded corners that form an elliptical surface, a formation common at Preclassic sites including Cuello, Becan, Dzibilchaltun and the Maya district of Teotihuacán (Valdes 1989b:34; Hammond 1991).

Group E contains an Astronomic Commemoration Complex (ACC), also known as an E Group, an architectural type found at several Preclassic sites such as Cerros, Tikal, Lamanai and El Mirador (Schele and Freidel 1990:136). Each of these complexes contains a standard architectural arrangement of a single large temple/pyramid across the plaza from a parallel lateral platform topped with three independent superstructures. It is generally accepted that this arrangement aligned the structures in a way that allowed for accurate observation of the movement of the sun and stars across the sky as a means of recording the passage of time.[69] At the center of Group E lies Structure E-VII-sub, a multi-tiered pyramid decorated with stucco masks displaying symbols associated with the passage of the sun and Venus (Ricketson and Ricketson 1937:75-92; Schele and Freidel 1990:136) [Fig. 63]. Sculpture marked Structure E-VII-sub as the

[69] see footnotes #32, 52

center of the cosmos or the *axis mundi* and a model for the daily cycle of the sun and stars as overseen by the ruler (Schele and Freidel 1990:116). Found throughout the lowland region, the Astronomical Commemoration Complex is the architectural expression of the ruler's ability to control the heavens, one of several ideological supports of political power during the Preclassic (Valdes and Fahsen 1995:197).

There is no evidence of new construction, remodeling or ritual activity in Group E between 200-250 AD. Ritual activity resumed in Group E after 250 AD and the complex continued to be an active location for the duration of Uaxactun's history. However, there is little evidence of new construction or remodeling after this date.

Group H

The rulers of Uaxactun began construction on Group H at some point during the Late Preclassic probably around 150 AD (Valdes 1989c:604) [Fig. 64]. Group H has a short occupation history (150-200 AD) and was buried and abandoned only fifty years after its construction (Valdes 1989c:604). Group H sits on an elevated platform with rounded corners, similar to that of Group E and other Preclassic complexes. The group consists of several structures of varied size with stucco masks and sculpted friezes. Structure H-sub-3 dominates the group and was most likely the symbolic center the complex. The façade iconography of H-sub-3 and the earlier version H-sub-2 is typical of Preclassic temple/pyramids such as Structure E-VII-sub at Uaxactun and Structure 5C-2a at Cerros in its display of motifs representing the different levels of the cosmos

(Schele and Freidel 1990:136-138) [Fig. 65,66].

Several of the buildings combine to form a large multi-roomed complex, possibly the first formal palace-type structure at Uaxactun (Valdes 1986b:126). The discovery of Group H is significant because it provides Preclassic examples of an architectural type and structural features typically associated with the Classic period (Valdes 1986b:126). These finds firmly establish the roots of "Classic Maya architecture" in the Preclassic and ground it as an internal artistic innovation and not the passive product of outside "influence".

Group A

Group A is a collection thirty-four structures located on the western side of the city. The group is subdivided into three principal groups, the A-I complex, Structure A-V and the East Plaza [Fig. 67]. The hilltop beneath Group A was leveled at some point during the initial phase of the Early Classic (c. 250-300 AD) to accommodate the construction of plaza floors and structural platforms (A. L. Smith 1950:13-14). Group A grew to its present size in the late sixth century as part of a construction boom at Uaxactun which included the expansion of royal palaces, temples and plazas as well as the addition of a network of roads that connected various parts of the site (Laporte 1989b:626; Valdes 1989b:35). This new construction occurred at approximately the same time that renovation and ritual activity ceased in Group E suggesting a shift in the architectural focus of the city to Group A by the end of the Early Classic (A.L. Smith 1950:14-17).

Structure A-I

Structure A-I was the first construction in Group A and one of only three structures in the group with evidence of Preclassic architecture [Fig.68]. The remains of Structure A-sub-1 suggest that it had a similar layout and decoration to Structure E-VII-sub (Valdes 1989b:30). However, the structural base of A-I was expanded and remodeled between 250 and 300 AD to erase any similarities with its Preclassic predecessor (R.E. Smith 1937:214). Later construction converted the structure into a "Classic-style" temple/pyramid with a two-roomed superstructure resting on a multi-tiered platform connected to the plaza below by a central stairway. Within the structure was a single tomb (Burial A-6) containing an older male surrounded by a variety of funerary offerings.[70] Five new range-style vaulted structures flanked the plaza in front of Structure A-I by the end of the Early Classic [Fig. 69]. The plaza was eventually enclosed by the construction of a second unexcavated temple/pyramid structure (A-IX). Multiple remodelings and new construction suggest that Structure A-I and the individual buried there maintained their importance throughout the remainder of the Classic period (Valdes 1989b:31).

East Plaza

The East Plaza originated around 300 AD as a scattered group of small and

[70] The tomb included conventional Maya burial goods including jade, shell, stingray spines and a codex fragment (R.E. Smith 1937:216). The burial lacked ceramics, a common feature of Late Preclassic and initial Early Classic elite burials at Uaxactun. The individual interred was clearly an individual of high status, perhaps a governor or ranked aristocrat, buried in a structure of historical importance (Valdes 1989b:35).

diverse buildings. All of the structures were built using the conventional Lowland construction technique of a rubble core finished with a masonry veneer and a coat of red stucco. Archaeological data suggests that the East Plaza functioned as a major residential area and site of ceremonial activity during the latter half of the Early Classic (Valdes 1989b:33). A collection of unusual multi-tiered round structures found in several courtyards may have functioned as obstacles in an alternative version of the ballgame (Valdes 1989b:35; Valdes and Fahsen 1995:203) [Fig. 70].[71] By the middle of the Early Classic (c. 400-550 AD), the East Plaza underwent a number of structural changes including the construction of a new pyramid (A-XV) and the consolidation of the original buildings into a single structure (A-XVIII). A-XVIII is a two-tiered platform supporting a complex superstructure with eighteen interior rooms that probably functioned as the principal royal palace for the dynasty responsible for the construction of Groups A and B (Valdes 1989b:36). The palatial complex A-XVIII was spatially linked to the royal necropolis (Structure A-V) with a marked similarity in configuration and architectural style to the North and Central Acropolis at Tikal.

Structure A-V

Structure A-V sits at the center of Group A at the northeast corner of the A-I complex and is the largest, richest and most structurally complex architectural feature within the group [Fig. 71]. Based on ceramic evidence, the first phase of Structure A-V was probably a small elite complex built during the Late Preclassic (c. 250 BC-250

[71] Similar evidence of ballgame activity within an Early Classic residential complex is found in Group 6C-XVI at Tikal (Laporte and Fialko 1990:52-57).

AD). Little remains of the original building as it was constructed with perishable materials; however, the earliest surviving versions of the A-V platform had rounded corners similar in design to the platforms supporting Groups E and H (A.L. Smith 1950:17; Valdes 1989b:34). The complex underwent multiple renovations and expansions between 300 and 600 AD with later constructions built directly on top of the Preclassic platform (Valdes 1989b:31). The first version of Structure A-V consisted of three individual vaulted structures (A, B, and C) arranged in a triadic pattern on a single supporting platform. By the time of this construction, the triadic pattern had become a standard lowland configuration for architectural complexes containing royal burials.[72] Each structure has a two-roomed interior chamber seated on a terraced pyramidal base connected to the plaza below by a central stairway (Valdes 1989b:31-32). The exterior of the structure was covered with red plaster, stucco sculpture and apron molding (A. L Smith 1950:19-24, 23-44). Structure A-V contained several burials associated with multiple levels of construction strongly suggesting that the structure was built for specific use as a dynastic mortuary shrine (A. L. Smith 1950:26).[73] Overall, the

[72] There is a definite shift from the variety of earlier burials found scattered throughout the site toward a concentration and standardization of funerary architecture and furniture in Group A (Valdes 1989b:38). The triadic group has local roots in the Preclassic Groups E and H, but grew in size and shifted function during the Early Classic. Structure A-V retains the Preclassic tradition of arranging architecture in a triadic pattern but with the expansion and elaboration necessary to reflect the kingly status of those buried within.

[73] Burials A-29, A-31 and A-22 are the richest tombs within the complex, probably belonging to the rulers in power during the Early Classic (Valdes 1986b:127). These are the earliest tombs at Uaxactun to contain ceramics of both local and "foreign" types including Aguila Orange and Balanza Black basal flange and ring-stand bowls, and a handful of cylinder tripods (Valdes 1989b:36-38). Located beneath the physical center

architectural form, style and function of Structure A-V are strikingly similar to the North Acropolis at Tikal (Valdes 1989b:38; Valdes and Fahsen 1995:217).[74]

Group B

Group B is the second largest architectural group at Uaxactun with thirty-six structures divided into two sectors [Fig.72]. The eastern section has eleven structures of varied size and orientation with no central plaza. This area has not yet been excavated so the chronology, contents and function of these structures remain unclear. The western district consists of a large plaza surrounded by a multi-roomed range structure (B-I), four temple/pyramids (B-II, IV, VI and VIII) and a ballcourt (B-V). Connected to Group A by a causeway, Group B probably served similar multiple functions as a residential area, ceremonial center and elite burial ground. The two largest structures of

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of the complex (Structure F), Burial A-29 is the earliest, largest and richest burial within Structure A-V. The location of the burial, tomb architecture and ceramic material are similar to concurrent burials at Tikal, particularly Burial 22, that contain the remains of rulers in power after the arrival of Siyaj K'ak' (Laporte and Fialko 1990:57). Burial A-31 is located beneath Structure G, a single room superstructure built in axial alignment with Structure F and Burial A-29. The tomb contained a single older male of very high status, probably the successor of the ruler buried in A-29 (Valdes 1989b: 37). The burial patterns established by tombs A-29 and A-31 continued with two later burials (A-22 and A-20). The combined burials of A-V probably represent the successive kings of the Uaxactun dynasty after Tikal gained political control over the city around 378 AD.

[74] It is unclear whether or not the individuals interred within A-V were biological descendents of Tikal's rulers. The inscriptions on the Stelae 26, 22 and 25 erected in front of Structure A-V date between 400-534 AD, making their protagonists contemporaries of Siyaj Chan K'awiil II, Kan Chitam and Chak Tok Ich'aak II of Tikal and Governor X of Rio Azul. These four rulers, and presumably those buried within A-V, represent the first generations of the dynasty descended from the ruler in Burial A-29, who was in all likelihood installed by Siyaj K'ak' after 378 AD (Valdes 1989b: 39). The strong similarity in funerary architecture and burial assemblage, particularly the inclusion of Mexican ceramic forms, is strong evidence that the two sites were closely connected at this point in history.

Groups A and B (A-V and B-II) sit at extreme ends of the causeway in spatial alignment with each other. The similar construction history, structural type, and apparent function of Groups A and B combined with their spatial connection suggest that the two complexes were built and used by the same elite group (Laporte 1989b:633; Valdes and Fahsen 1995:217). Constructed relatively late in Uaxactun's architectural history, Group B represents one of the city's final architectural projects.

Excavations in the western section revealed six phases of construction in the principal plaza of Group B dating from 350 to 550 AD. The earliest structures in the group sit on a floor constructed around 350 AD and contain ceramic evidence dating from the Preclassic through the Late Classic (250-600 AD) (A.L. Smith 1950:50-52). Despite the presence of Chicanel phase ceramics, there is no remaining evidence of Preclassic construction or occupation (Laporte 1989b:628). Each structure consists of a single vaulted chamber atop a terraced pyramidal base finished with red stucco and apron-molding (A. L. Smith 1950:52-61). All of these structures display architectural and decorative features typical of Lowland temple/pyramid structures with strong similarities to the temple/pyramid and palace architecture of Tikal (Laporte 1989b:633-634).

One of these structures, B-VIII, is of particular importance to this study as it is associated with two Early Classic monuments with Mexican iconography [Fig. 73]. Stelae 4 and 5, the earliest monuments of the group, were found flanking the central

stairway of Structure B-VIII [Fig. 16].[75] The placement of the stelae within the stratigraphy of the plaza floor suggests that they were erected during the final two construction phases of the structure (378-550 AD), after the inclusion of the Burial B-I.[76] Both monuments are significant to the study of Mexican/Maya interaction as they depict individuals dressed in Mexican warrior costume and record events related to the regional political changes of the fourth and fifth centuries.[77] We do not have a complete understanding about the individuals depicted or the events recorded on Stelae 4 and 5; however, it is important to note that both monuments conform to stylistic and iconographic conventions of Early Classic royal portraiture despite the display of

[75] Stela 5 appears to have been erected first because it is included during a phase of remodeling that included changes to the façade to incorporate a stairway flanked by stucco masks (Laporte 1989b:630). Stela 4 was placed slightly later without any structural modification (Laporte 1989b:632). The heavily eroded text of Stela 5 records the events of the so-called *entrada*, or "arrival of strangers", at Tikal in 378 AD (Stuart 2000:477).

[76] Excavations of Structure B-VIII revealed a single vaulted shaft tomb containing multiple skeletons (Burial B-I), all females and children (Laporte 1989b:630). The tomb chamber was intrusive to the pyramidal base second phase of construction and therefore predates the erection of Stelae 4 and 5 (Laporte 1989b: 630). There is little burial furniture associated with the tomb, making identification of the individuals or their social role difficult to determine. Burial B-I is the only known example of a group burial at Uaxactun and one of only two known elite burials dating to the initial years of the Early Classic (c.300-375 AD) (A. L. Smith 1950:52,101; Laporte 1989b:633).

[77] The events of the intrusion are also depicted on a mural (now destroyed) found inside B-XIII. The mural depicted two standing figures, one raising his arm in a gesture of submission to another figure dressed in a Mexican warrior costume (Martin and Grube 2000:30). The identity of the figures and the nature of the event depicted are unclear, but the mural may have been further illustration of the *entrada* at Tikal and/or the dynastic change at Uaxactun. The identity of the individual is unconfirmed but may represent Siyaj K'ak' or the ruler he installed at Uaxactun (Martin and Grube 2000:30). The placement of these monuments and the mural in association with Structure B-XIII may reflect the involvement of the individual buried within in Tikal's political takeover.

Mexican costume.[78] On the whole, the art and architecture of Group B follows Lowland standards of construction and representation. As in Group A, there is a particularly strong visual and spatial connection with the certain architectural groups at Tikal. Such an association is evident in the fact that sculpture with Mexican iconography and ceramic forms were placed in conjunction with architecture constructed and finished in the traditional Maya style, exactly as in the North Acropolis of Tikal. The overall style, location and contents of the mortuary temple for the individual interred in Structure B-VIII draw a visual and symbolic connection with the shrines of the ancestral rulers of Tikal, not Uaxactun or Central Mexico.

RIO AZUL

Introduction

The site of Rio Azul is located in the Northeast corner of the Peten district of Guatemala, less than 20 km. from the borders of the Mexican state of Campeche and Belize [Map 2,5]. Construction at Rio Azul began in the Preclassic and most likely peaked during the Early Classic (specifically between 250-550 AD), with little evidence of new construction during the Late Classic. Architectural evidence suggested a period of destruction, abandonment and later refurbishment during the sixth and seventh centuries (Adams 1986b:446). There is very little, if any, evidence of *talud-tablero* architecture at Rio Azul; however, the presence of Mexican ceramic forms in elite

[78] Uaxactun's early monuments include: Stelae 9,18,19,22 and 26. Line drawings of these sculptures and their texts are published in Graham 1986b.

burial contexts suggest some level of association with Teotihuacán, probably filtered through political connections with Tikal. What follows is a selective presentation of the early architectural development of Rio Azul with a particular focus on the structures excavated and surveyed by the Rio Azul Project that display *talud-tablero* features or mark primary sacred spaces.[79] Particular attention is paid to the architectural features and elements of material culture that may suggest connections with Central Mexico or provide insight into Rio Azul's place in regional history during the Preclassic and Early Classic periods.

Site Layout and Architecture

The Rio Azul Project depended on mapping and targeted excavation as the primary methods for reconstructing the history and function(s) of the ancient city. Stratigraphic and ceramic analysis confirmed architectural and settlement patterns that suggested Rio Azul was continuously occupied from the Preclassic through the Late

[79] Ian Graham of Harvard's Peabody Museum and Richard E. W. Adams of the University of Texas at San Antonio formed the Rio Azul Project as an effort to conserve and record the city's structures and artifacts. The project ran from 1983 to 1987 and pursued two primary research goals. The first objective was to salvage any material culture remaining after the destruction caused by looter activity with a particular interest in conserving the tomb murals. Secondly, the project sought to reconstruct the function of the multiple architectural complexes throughout the history of the city. Theoretically, the project desired to establish a functional picture of the site that would reveal information about both the origins and collapse of the city (Adams 1990:23;1999:7). Ultimately Adams sought to obtain information about the chronology and cultural history of Rio Azul through a determination of the city's economic and political function (Adams 1995:35). The complete findings are available in the project's excavation reports, *Rio Azul Reports* 1-5, edited by Richard E.W. Adams and published by the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Classic (1000 BC-900 AD), with particular strength during the Early Classic period (250-550 AD) (Adams 1984:1-4, 2000:5). The construction of semi-permanent architecture began during the Middle Preclassic; however, settlement patterns suggest that there was no centralized elite district until the Early Classic. Instead the city was made up of what Adams calls "ritual elite clusters" that included both residential and ceremonial structures probably occupied by multiple politically independent lineage groups (Adams 1995:38). Social stratification certainly existed at Rio Azul during the Preclassic as certain areas of the city contained monumental masonry structures.[80] Structure G-103, a large multi-tiered platform located in the southwestern sector of the site, dominated the landscape possibly as early as 500 BC. The structure was rebuilt and expanded several times during the Late Preclassic ultimately reaching a height of ten meters and a volume of approximately 89,000m (Adams 1995:35). G-103 was the largest and most complex structure in the Preclassic built environment of Rio Azul and more than likely the principal ceremonial space. The apron-molding and sculpted stucco façade of the structure followed Preclassic conventions of architectural construction,

[80] The relatively large amount of hieroglyphic texts recording Early Classic history has often been viewed as evidence of a cultural change associated with a new political structure that included dynastic formation and succession. Since there are fewer known Preclassic texts, it is difficult to determine whether or not hereditary rulers existed before the Early Classic based on the archaeological and visual records alone. However, increased excavation and investigation of Preclassic sites and a greater understanding of the surviving Preclassic texts reveals that this earlier period was quite sophisticated and probably supported some sort of lineage-based ruling class. Based on his excavations of Structure G-103, Fred Valdez has suggested that a hereditary aristocracy which at the very least involved centralized control over labor was in place at Rio Azul by the Late Preclassic (1993 manuscript, cited in Adams 1999:109-110). Julie Hendon has suggested that patterns within the architectural variation of the site point to a minimal three-tiered social structure during the Preclassic (Hendon 1989).

design and sculptural decoration (Valdez 1995:217).[81] The political/ritual significance of Structure G-103 appears to have ended in the Late Preclassic as the architectural center of the site shifted to a new complex known as Group A (Valdez 2000:230). G-103 was abandoned and buried during the fourth century and shows no evidence of Early or Late Classic re-occupation or remodeling (Valdez 1995:218, Valdez 2000:229; Adams 1999:139).[82]

Preclassic Rio Azul also contained a variety of residential structures ranging in form and materials from simple pole and thatch houses to complex multi-roomed masonry constructions with plaster floors and thatched roofs (Adams 1995:35). One such residential zone, known as BA-20, contained several keyhole-shaped masonry constructions on low platforms.[83] Keyhole plans were common in residential districts of other Preclassic sites such as Uaxactun, Kinal, Tikal and the Maya *barrio* of Teotihuacán (Ricketson and Ricketson 1937:197, A.L. Smith 1950:58-9, Coe 1991 personal communication cited in Adams 1995:37; Rattray 1987, cited in Adams 1995). Such a broad range of usage both within the Maya region and abroad suggest that the

[81] The structure was built with a rubble core finished with a masonry veneer coated by a layer of red-modeled plaster, the same construction technique and materials used at several Lowland Preclassic sites (Adams 1999:42; see also Hansen 1998, Hammond 1991). Recent investigations by Fred Valdez have suggested that the modeled stucco motifs of G-103 bear striking similarities to iconographic conventions of sculpture from Izapa, a large Preclassic city located on the Pacific Slope of Mexico (Julia Guernsey Kappleman, personal communication; Valdez 2003)

[82] Lack of ceramics and cessation of architectural construction is the principal evidence of abandonment during the Early Classic.

[83] BA-20 consisted of both residential and ritual structures that contained burials and other ceremonial deposits, such as lip-to-lip caches holding perishable materials, a dedicatory assemblage common at several Preclassic sites (Black 1987:197-98).

keyhole-shaped structure was a common architectural form for the Preclassic Maya.[84] The form and style of the early built environment demonstrate that Rio Azul was active in the culturally sophisticated and politically complex society of the Preclassic (Adams 1999:157).

Rio Azul experienced a period of civic growth after 250 AD that included the construction of nine architectural compounds (groups A-I). Preclassic structures and complexes such as G-103 and BA-20 were ultimately buried and/or leveled to create a base platform for the complexes that defined the acropolis (Black 1987:200,218; Adams 1995:40; Valdez 2000 217-18). These architectural compounds replaced Structure G-103 as the center of elite activity at Rio Azul for the duration of the Early Classic. Greater architectural diversity accompanied an expansion of territory, population and prosperity at Rio Azul during the Early Classic.[85] Most notable is increased construction of monumental elite residential and administrative structures commonly referred to as "palaces" and their associated courtyards within the core of the site (Adams 1999:42).[86]

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[84] One particular structure, at location 205, was a two-roomed structure that originally supported a polychrome stucco façade as possibly a roof comb, features common in later Classic period Maya architecture (Adams 1995:37,1999:42,135-136). The architectural and decorative features of this structure parallel those found in other Preclassic complexes, particularly Groups E and H at Uaxactun.

[85] Each of architectural group consists of a variety of masonry structures including pyramids, palaces, ballcourts and possible fortifications (Orrego Corzo 1987; Ellis 1991).

[86] Adams defines palaces as "single or multistoried buildings that contain residential rooms and administrative, storage, protocol and other functional zones" that are oriented inward toward enclosed courtyards (Adams 1999:42). The largest palaces are connected to the largest temples creating a series of complexes which to appear to be ranked according to size and architectural complexity (Adams 1999:120-121). Adams

Although the size, plan and orientation of superstructures changed during the Early Classic, architects continued to follow the convention of retaining a conceptual and spatial connection to the past through the reuse of Preclassic substructures (Adams 1989:9). There is also considerable conservatism in Early Classic architectural style with little change in form, materials, construction technique, layout, finish and decoration from structures built during the Preclassic. The primary difference is in scale, location and degree of elaboration (Adams 1999:42-43,48). Only a single platform structure displays potential *talud-tablero* elements, evidence of the rarity of the use of Mexican architectural forms within the built environment of Early Classic Rio Azul.

Group A

Group A is located in the southwestern sector of Rio Azul and is considered the architectural center of the city during the Early Classic. The complex was built in six construction phases, all of which used conventional Lowland construction techniques and exterior features such as apron-molded terraces, central stairways, vaulted superstructures with roof combs, and modeled plaster façades decorated with painted low-relief sculpture (Adams and Gatling 1986:196-201). There are no known examples of *talud-tablero* architectural features on any structure within Group A.

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equates the appearance of palace structures and the variation in architectural scale with urban growth that "signals the emergence of a hereditary leadership class" during the Early Classic (Adams 1999:49). However, ongoing research at Rio Azul and other sites is uncovering more evidence that there was a large degree of social stratification during the Preclassic that probably included a hereditary ruling class.

A-3 Complex

The group consists of multiple structures but is dominated by the A-3 complex, a monumental temple-pyramid compound made up of five independent structures resting on a single multileveled terraced substructure [Figs. 74,75]. The entire complex sits on an artificial platform (Platform A-1) constructed during the Late Preclassic around 100 AD, the same time other areas of the site were being leveled for the construction of the acropolis (Orrego Corzo 2000:63,69).[87] The first version of the principal structure of the A-3 complex (A-3-4sub) was built on the new platform by 250 AD. The construction of a new structure (A-3-sub 3) between 250-380 AD rearranged the space and possibly formalized the function of the complex as a mortuary shrine for the ruling dynasty.[88] A-3-sub 3 was buried to create the base platform for a new structure A-3-sub2a, built after 380 AD. Like earlier structures, A-3-sub2a contained no burials but was constructed in association with three stone altars (Altars 1-3), Stela 1

[87] The proposed date is based on the predominant presence of Mamom and Chicanel ceramics found in the construction fill of the platform.

[88] Orrego Corzo suggested that the A-3 complex had a funerary function as early as its first incarnation (A-3-4sub) even though there was no evidence of a burial in its interior (Orrego Corzo 2000:69). Later excavations proved that G-103, not A-3, was the principal mortuary shrine in the Late Preclassic (Valdez 2000). The assertion that A-3-sub-3 functioned as a mortuary temple/pyramid is also difficult to confirm as no axial burials were uncovered. The lack of burials could be attributed to incomplete excavation or looting activity. However, the form and placement of the structure are similar to later temple/pyramids that did house formal elite tombs. Despite the lack of skeletal material predating 400 AD, Orrego Corzo suggests that A-3 had clear ceremonial importance and was perhaps built in commemoration of the political changes that took place at Tikal, Uaxactun and other Peten cities during the late fourth century (Orrego Corzo 2000:70-71).

and two sacrificial infant offerings (Adams 1999:138) [Fig. 76,77].[89] The selective nature of tunnel excavations, rampant looting (both ancient and modern) and the reuse or relocation of ancestral bones makes it difficult to determine whether or not these early structures were mortuary shrines.[90]

The sixth and final phase of the A-3 complex (500-550 AD) consisted of two structures (Structures A-1 and A-5) erected in association with two burials (Tombs 4 and 10). Leading up to the Hiatus of the seventh century, the façade of A-3 received renovations including a new façade and the construction of several small structures (S.1-3) linked to various tombs and monuments buried within the structure.[91] There was no further remodeling or new construction on A-3 during the Late Classic but the structure continued to serve its purpose as a mausoleum as at least three crypt burials

[89] In another attempt to link Rio Azul to Tikal, Adams notes that similar graphic depictions of bloodied nude captives similar to Altars 1-3 appear on the rear frieze of Structure 5D-86-6, an Early Classic structure in Tikal's Mundo Perdido (Adams 1999:75-79; Laporte and Fialko 1990:41-42) [Figs. 45,74]. Adams links the altar's imagery to the sculpture of Tikal as evidence of the introduction of a new iconography associated with "conquest and humiliation"(Adams 1999:76). The assertion that captive imagery appears only after the Early Classic reinforced his theory of a changing political order resultant of Rio Azul's conquest by Tikal during that period. However, it is important to remember that such graphic imagery was also common in the Preclassic art of other Lowland cities as well as Highland and Pacific Coastal sites such as Kaminaljuyu and Izapa. The surviving monuments of Rio Azul primarily display rulers in traditional Maya costume standing over prone captives, the most common form of royal portraiture in the Peten region in both the Preclassic and Early Classic periods.

[90] The A-3 complex did eventually function as an identifiable mortuary shrine during the fifth century when two tombs (Tombs 7 and 12) were carved into the bedrock beneath the structure. Unfortunately, both tombs were looted so there is little information about their occupants and the formal qualities of their chosen burial furniture.

[91] Two new tombs (6 and 12) were added during this period.

were interred during this time (Orrego Corzo 2000:73).[92]

Adams and his colleagues cite the iconography of monuments found within the A-3 complex, particularly Altars 1-3 and Stela 1, as evidence of a hierarchical political relationship between Rio Azul and Tikal established in the late fourth century (Adams 1999). Stela 1's text may place Sihyaj K'ahk' in association with Rio Azul within twenty years after the *entrada* at Tikal in 378 AD that resulted in the death of Chak Tok Ich'aak I and the accession of Yax Nuun Ahiin I - a transfer of power that was overseen by the enigmatic figure, Sihyaj K'ahk' (Stuart 2000; Martin and Grube 2000). However, the identification of Sihyaj K'ahk's in the text is tenuous and the context of any interaction between Tikal and Rio Azul remains unknown (Simon Martin, personal communication). If read correctly, though, the text is similar in structure and content to others at Tikal, Bejucal and Uaxactun which record the installation of a new ruler overseen by Sihyaj K'ahk' (Martin and Grube 2000:30). At best, Stela 1 provides only speculative evidence of an overkingship relationship between Tikal and Rio Azul.

The visual record provides minimal information supporting the relationship suggested by the historical records of both sites. By the late fourth century, Rio Azul

[92] The final version of the structure (A-3-1a) became the highest at Rio Azul reaching an elevation of 36 meters, a height comparable to many Late Classic temple-pyramids at Tikal and Copan (Orrego Corzo 2000:57). Structure A-3-1a sits recessed along the central axis of the complex providing the visual, spatial and symbolic focus of the complex. All other structures are smaller and arranged symmetrically at lower levels on the pyramidal base in a way that emphasizes the higher status of A-3-1a. Although A-3-1a was probably the most significant structure within the complex, every building probably had a separate function as they each have a central stairway providing access from the courtyard below.

has a formal necropolis (A-3 complex) remarkably similar in architectural type, layout, style and function to the North Acropolis at Tikal. Furthermore, tombs incorporated into the A-3 complex and other elite burials after 400 AD contain examples of Mexican ceramic forms similar to those found in Burials 10 and 48 at Tikal. There are no known examples of portraits of individuals dressed in Mexican costume as found on Stelae 4,9 and 31 at Tikal and Stelae 4 and 5 at Uaxactun. Such imagery would further reinforce the proposed relationship between the two sites and the significance of the events of the *entrada* and Tikal in the dynastic history of Rio Azul.

Group B

Group B is a large architectural cluster consisting of 134 primarily residential structures connected to Group A by a causeway. B-11 is the largest structure within the group and is surrounded by smaller architectural complexes, one of which (B-56) was excavated by the Rio Azul Project [Fig. 78]. First excavated in 1985, the B-56 complex was most likely a mid-level elite palace-type residence with an "attendant shrine" (Adams 1987:15; Ellis 1991:1). The complex consists of multiple levels of Early Classic construction resting on an artificial terrace and basal platform built in the Late Preclassic (250 BC-250 AD) (Ellis and Dodt-Ellis 2000:146).[93] As it stands today, the B-56 complex consists of four courtyards surrounded by twenty stone buildings of

[93] The Preclassic platform probably once supported a superstructure that would have been razed for the construction of larger structures during the Early Classic (Adams 1987:17).

varying sizes.[94] The small structures were laid out and furnished in a way that suggests the complex functioned as housing for the highest level of society (Ellis 1991). There is evidence of social stratification within the palace itself including diverse room size, furnishings, material remains and burial patterns. The complex also included a mortuary structure (B-56) that grew over time in mass and the number of tombs within it.

The B-56 complex has been badly looted, robbing the area of much of its original contents. In an attempt to reconstruct the function of this complex, The Rio Azul Project excavated portions of Structures B-45-49, -53, -55-57, -60 and -62 to supplement data salvaged from six looter trenches dug into B-46, 55, 56 and 62. Looter's Trench 1, located on the west side of Structure B-56, led directly into Tomb 13, a rectangular burial chamber with red stucco walls. Protruding from the north wall of the trench just inches west of the structure were remnants of what Ellis believes is a *talud-tablero* style platform positioned on the original floor of the courtyard. (Ellis 1991:24-26; Ellis and Dodt-Ellis 2000:146-147) [Fig. 79]. The platform was built in association with the first phase of construction (B-56-I), before the placement of Tomb 13. Ellis dates the platform to the Early Classic (450-550 AD) based on the architectural style of the platform and nearby construction since there were no surviving ceramics associated with this structure.[95] Details of the construction technique, layout,

[94] B-53 sits at the highest elevation within the B-56 complex and shows evidence of significant looting, two factors suggesting that this architectural group and its burials held particular importance or at least a large quantity of artifacts (Ellis 1991:12).
[95] Ellis and Dodt-Ellis date the platform in part based on the assumption that *talud-tablero* architecture was a diagnostic feature of Teotihuacán culture and therefore must

proportions, and decoration of the platform are unknown as the upper portion and other sides of the platform were not excavated; therefore, it is difficult to confirm Ellis and Dodt-Ellis' *talud-tablero* identification.

Exploration of the other looter trenches (2-6) and controlled excavations uncovered multiple levels of construction beneath Structures B-46, 55, 56 and 62, all of which exhibited typical Maya construction on platforms finished with apron-molding (Ellis 1991:27; Ellis and Dodt-Ellis 2000:148,174). This suggests that the possible incorporation of *talud-tablero* features on the platform in front of Tomb 13 was unique in the group and the site as a whole. The unusual form of the platform led Adams to suggest that Tomb 13 might have been the tomb of the founder of Rio Azul (installed by the Tikal dynasty) based on its central location, early date and the amount of expansion of the complex after his interment (Adams 1987:17).[96] Tomb 13 was completely looted

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have been constructed before the decline of Teotihuacán's power in the 5th century. There is no consideration of local appropriation of the style or that the style was found in the Maya region, particularly at Tikal, as early as 250 BC or as late as 700 AD. He also anchors his dates on the appearance of Mexican ceramic forms and other "reflections of influences from Teotihuacán" throughout the Maya region around the same time (Ellis and Dodt-Ellis 2000:147).

[96] Formal burials within residential compounds were often reserved for important members of a lineage where divine kings were buried in the temple-pyramids of the acropolis alongside other members of the dynasty. The A-3 complex was already in use as a royal mausoleum by the time Tomb 13 was constructed, suggesting that it was not built for a king. Furthermore, the remaining artifacts and decoration of the tomb are "less elaborate in both morphology and structural association" than most other Early Classic tombs at Rio Azul (Ellis and Dodt-Ellis 2000:147). Therefore, the occupant of Tomb 13 was more likely a significant member of aristocracy than a ruler. The grandiose architecture, central location and higher elevation of the Structure B-56 and the large number of dedicatory offerings and secondary burials associated with Tomb

of its skeletal material and artifacts and its murals contain no hieroglyphic information, so Adams' identification is difficult to prove. However, if Ellis and Dodt-Ellis are correct in their stylistic identification, the placement of a *talud-tablero* platform in association with a structure that would eventually include a burial is similar in form and layout to Structures Sub-48 and Sub-26 in Group 6C-XVI, a contemporary elite residential group at Tikal (Adams 1986b:436; Laporte 1992).[97]

Group C

Group C is a large architectural group located to the northeast of Groups A and B. The group consists of diverse structures including elite residences, burial platforms, multi-functioning administrative buildings and a ballcourt. All of the architecture within the Group C conforms to Peten standards of architectural style, construction technique, materials and finish. There are no known examples of structures with *talud-tablero* features in this group. The group is important to this study because it was the location of several Early Classic burials that predate the tombs found in Structure A-3, a few of which contained Mexican ceramic forms and skeletons draped in elements of Mexican costume and ritual paraphernalia. A brief discussion of these tombs and their contents is

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13 do suggest that he/she was probably the highest ranking individual residing in the B-56 complex (Ellis and Dodt-Ellis 2000:181).

[97] The platform was constructed and destroyed before the burial of the individual in Tomb 13. Therefore, it is unclear whether the platform was associated with funerary rituals or not. However, its unique style could suggest an association of the space and the tomb's occupant with Teotihuacán and/or Tikal and the political events of the late fourth century. Without further data, we can only speculate about the occupant of the tomb and the architecture surrounding his/her burial.

necessary to establish any connection between Rio Azul and Central Mexico. There are also strong parallels in the use of architecture and burial furniture to contemporary tombs at Tikal and Copan making Group C an important window into the place of Rio Azul in the political landscape of the Early Classic.

Salvage excavations included the excavation and recording of the twenty-eight known tombs and their contents. Tomb 1, the largest and most elaborate of the Rio Azul tombs, was found within Structure C-1, a large pyramid located on the western boundary of Group C, just east of Group B [Fig. 80]. Looters removed or destroyed the majority of its artifacts and skeletal remains leaving little information about the tomb's occupant beyond the murals on the walls (Adams 1995:44) [Fig. 81].[98] Based on the hieroglyphic texts in the murals, the tomb dates to the fifth century AD and originally held the remains of an enigmatic but important individual nicknamed "Governor X". The central location of the tomb, the large size of the pyramid and its isolation in relation to other structures within Group C confirm the high status of the individual interred within. Like Stela 1, the tomb mural offers a hieroglyphic inference of political connections between Governor X and the rulers of Tikal; however, his exact identity and political status remains uncertain.[99]

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[98] A small number of objects including ceramic sherds, jade pieces, shell, animal bones and hematite also survived looting efforts (Hall 1984:53-54).

[99] The style, color and iconography of the tomb murals are markedly similar to Preclassic tombs at Tikal (Coggins 1975:54-68). Two large symbols resembling masks flank the text, images which Adams interprets as emblems of the parents and grandparent of Governor X. Comparing the iconography of the Tomb 1 mural to stela imagery at Tikal, Adams extrapolates that these masks resemble glyphic names of the

Two smaller tombs (Tombs 19 and 23) that contained two male skeletons and "unusual" burial furniture flanked the larger, central Tomb 1.[100] Like Tomb 1, Tombs 19 and 23 displayed murals depicting Maya iconography and hieroglyphs rendered in the traditional Lowland figural and calligraphic style in addition to offerings of jade, bone and ceramics. Tombs 19 and 23 are the most frequently cited evidence of a Teotihuacán presence at Rio Azul due to the presence of burial furniture "far out of the norms of contemporary tombs at the site" including Mexican ceramic forms such as the cylinder tripod, pyrite mirrors and a "Tlaloc" effigy vase (Adams 1987:24-25) [Fig.

Tikal rulers, Yax Nuun Ahiin I (Curl Nose) and Siyaj Chan K'awiil II (Stormy Sky) of Tikal who he suggests are the father/grandfather of Governor X (Adams 1995:44, 1999:80). Adams' interpretation of the text and images of Tomb 1 is highly extrapolative and problematic (Simon Martin, personal communication 2005). As such, the meaning of the iconography of the murals is still under debate.

The mural includes a text that mentions the "birth" of Governor X occurring in 417 AD. The exact meaning of "birth" in this context is uncertain (Simon Martin, personal communication 2005). David Stuart has suggested that the glyph may not refer to a literal birth, but instead may describe a metaphorical (re)birth or resurrection (David Stuart, personal communication 2005).

[100] Both tombs were cave-like chambers and antechambers carved into Preclassic platforms and sealed with stone and plaster, topped off with a layer of obsidian/chert chips (Adams 1987:24). This tomb architecture is similar to other tombs at Rio Azul, Tikal, Uaxactun and Copan that contained non-ruler/attendant figures and Mexican-style objects (Hall 1984, 1986; Adams 1987:24; Valdes and Fahsen 1995: 202-203). This obsidian/chert layer is also found above the vaulted chambers of Tombs 2, 3, 5, 7, 11 and 12 from Rio Azul (Hall 1984, 1986). Similar burial patterns exist at Tikal (Burial 125), Uaxactun, Caracol, Altar de Sacrificios and Dos Pilas, all sites with political ties to Tikal (Coe 1990: 336-7; Valdes and Fahsen 1995: 202-203). Only Tomb 5 contained pyrite and one piece of green obsidian, materials associated with Central Mexico, and none of these tombs had cylinder tripod ceramics. However, the significance of these findings remains cloudy as all of the tombs were looted of the majority of their contents.

82].[101] Adams and his colleagues have used the fact that these and other tombs contain Mexican ceramic forms to argue that there were probably ideological and political ties between Rio Azul and Central Mexico, probably filtered through a relationship with Tikal (Adams 1990:35). The presence of these vessels makes the tombs of Rio Azul one of the primary sources of information about possible cultural connections between the Maya and Central Mexico. However, all three tombs were placed in architecture that is distinctly Maya in form and style. In addition, the majority of burial furniture from each of the tombs follows Maya conventions of form, iconography and decorative style. The ceramic record suggests some connection with Central Mexico, but burial contents and patterns in the style, layout and function of associated structures firmly associate the

[101] The Rio Azul Reports place great emphasis on the Mexican forms and symbols within these tombs; however, the vast majority of tomb contents fit well within the typological, iconographic and stylistic conventions of Maya art (Adams 1990:29). Tombs 1, 19 and 23 all contained cylinder tripod vessels, a ceramic form generally associated with Central Mexico; however, a review of the descriptions and the few published images of tripod vessels from Rio Azul reveal that most of them carried Maya iconography and all followed Maya stylistic conventions in their decoration. Six out of the 15 complete vessels in Tomb 19 were lidded cylinder tripod vessels, all with Maya-head knobs and decoration. Tomb 19 also contained one ring stand bowl and two fragments of painted stucco vessels (Hall 1986:94-95). Tomb 23 contained 13 cylinder tripods, all monochrome Balanza Black, most with Maya head-knobs (Hall 1987:132). The only visual quality of the excavated vessels that could be considered "foreign" is the form of the vessel itself. The chemical composition of the clay and paste of these vessels has not been analyzed; therefore, there is no scientific confirmation of whether the vessels were made at Rio Azul, another Lowland site, or imported from Central Mexico. Nonetheless, Adams argued that the quantity of Mexican-style ceramics and a single figurine within the tombs suggested that the two males interred within the tombs were not Maya, but possibly advisors from Teotihuacán (Adams 1987:25). As in other investigations, the artistic form and style of an object was equated with the ethnicity of the individuals with which they are interred. In this equation there is a complete disregard for the eclectic visual qualities of the so-called Mexican-style objects or the majority of artifacts that are easily recognized as Maya in material, form, iconography and style.

individuals inside with the rituals and trappings of traditional Maya ancestor worship with a particular similarity to the mortuary architecture of the North Acropolis of Tikal.[102]

COPAN

Introduction

The city of Copan is located in northwestern Honduras just five kilometers east of the Guatemalan border [Map 2]. Copan sits along the banks of the Copan River, a tributary of the larger Motagua River, the most significant transport route within the southeastern sector of the Maya region (Canuto, Bell and Sharer 2004:3). Copan was located at the periphery of the Maya Lowlands at a strategic point for interaction with the Highlands of Guatemala and Central America. The location of the city and its extensive political, cultural and economic ties with diverse areas were critical in Copan's development as a cosmopolitan center and regional power (Willey 1986:172). By the fifth century, Copan had become part of the Lowland Maya cultural sphere but

[102] The burials themselves provide further evidence against a direct connection between Teotihuacán and Rio Azul. Osteological examination of the skeletal remains from Tomb 23 revealed that the two occupants were males with evidence of two typically Maya physical features: an artificially altered skull and jade inlay teeth (Massey and Steele 2000:255). Superficial analysis suggests that this individual was ethnically Maya, but without further analysis it remains unknown whether or not he was from Rio Azul, Tikal or another location within the Maya region. The bones recovered from the three tombs have not been tested using strontium isotope analysis, a technique that reveals chemical signatures of the bones that offer clues to the geographical origin of the individual tested (Buikstra 1997, cited in Martin and Grube 2000:193). Without this type of analysis there is no scientific confirmation of the ethnicity of the tombs' occupants.

retained aspects of native and Highland artistic tradition. Throughout its history, Copan's rulers embraced innovation while maintaining key aspects of Maya artistic convention resulting in an eclectic style that was unique to Copan (Baudez 1986:25; M. Miller 1986:76; Fash and Stuart 1991:148).

Copan is one of the most extensively excavated and studied sites in the Maya region with a history of investigation that dates back to the late nineteenth century. However, until the 1990s the majority of architecture and material uncovered and investigated dated to the Late Classic period (600-850 AD). As a result, scholarly attention tended to focus on the final centuries of the polity's existence with significantly less investigation of Copan's Preclassic (1400 BC-400 AD) and Early Classic (400-600 AD) history.[103] There is a relative lack of archaeological and architectural data for the Preclassic and Early Classic periods because earlier constructions and material remains are buried deep within later structures. There are also considerably fewer contemporary monuments with imagery and/or texts that provide information about political structure, social organization, history and culture. All of these factors have made it difficult to establish a comprehensive picture of the city's foundation and early growth. Recent research and publications by the Early

[103] The range of dates for Classic period divisions at Copan differs slightly from sites in the Peten. Sharer and others have coordinated these divisions with the dynastic history of the site so that the Early Classic period begins with the reign of Yax K'uk' Mo', the founder, who arrived at Copan around 426 AD. Although there is evidence of social complexity and hereditary rule during the Preclassic period, there are few surviving hieroglyphic texts. As such, the Preclassic is generally viewed as the "Pre-dynastic period" (Canuto, Bell and Sharer 2004:1,footnote1).

Copan Acropolis Project (ECAP) sponsored by the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania have centered on this enigmatic period in Copan's history with the hope that scholars can achieve a more complete view of the city's development (Canuto, Bell and Sharer 2004:1,7-8). The project used tunnels to expose early structures buried beneath the Late Classic Acropolis architecture with a particular focus on those buried below Structure 10L-16 (Sharer, Traxler, et al 1999). Like the Copan Acropolis Archaeological Project (PAAC) before it, ECAP archaeologists considered the architectural development of the early Acropolis in relation to historical texts and sculptural iconography (Sharer, Fash, et al 1999:226-227).[104] The theories and methodologies behind ECAP excavations are discussed in depth in Chapter One. What follows is a summary of the architectural development of Preclassic and Early Classic Copan as revealed, reconstructed and interpreted by archaeological, art historical and epigraphic investigations. The architectural style and layout of the Acropolis is considered in relation to tombs, sculpture and other aspects of material culture that inform our understanding of Copan's connections with Central Mexico and the Maya

[104] The Copan Acropolis Project (1977-1985) spurred multiple sub-projects including the Copan Acropolis Archaeological Project (PAAC) sponsored by Harvard University and directed by William Fash. PAAC centered on tunneling excavations into Structure 10L-26, the architecture buried beneath the East Court and Structure 10L-16, the architectural and symbolic heart of the Acropolis (Sharer, Miller, et al 1992; Sharer, Fash, et al 1999). Excavation and restoration efforts by PAAC were designed to establish a construction sequence for the Acropolis and its surrounding structures that could be correlated with hieroglyphic texts found *in situ* (Fash and Sharer 1991). The ultimate goal was to associate architectural and material evidence with the historical events in the reigns of individual rulers in order to establish a comprehensive reconstruction of Copan's history (Sharer, Fash, et al 1999:225; Fash, Fash, et al. 2004:66). The findings and methodology of the PAAC project were very influential on the work of ECAP (see Chapter 1).

Lowlands.

Site Layout and Architecture

The Principal Group is a collection of monumental constructions and open plazas that served as the civic and ceremonial center of Copan for the extent of the Classic period [Map 6]. The Principal Group is spatially segregated and architecturally distinct from surrounding residential areas clearly marking it as an elite space (Fash and Fash 1996:140-141). The Principal Group is divided into two sectors (the Great Plaza and the Acropolis) with distinct architectural histories, structural qualities and symbolic meaning. The Great Plaza is the largest section of the Principal Group and consists of almost half of the complex. The bulk of the area of the Great Plaza is a large open plaza that would eventually contain the majority of Copan's monumental sculpture. The plaza is surrounded by a low stepped platform to its east and a small cluster of structures on its western boundary. Structures 10L-26 and the ballcourt define the southeastern limits of the Great Plaza and segregate it from the Acropolis above. To the south of the Great Plaza is the Acropolis, a large architectural complex representing over 400 years of civic growth. By the Late Classic, the Acropolis stood high above the rest of the Great Plaza rendering it inaccessible to the general public (M. Miller 1988:153). Copan's Acropolis is divided into two architectural groups (the West Court and the East Court) that surround two large courtyards. The visible architecture of the West Court consists of six structures including Structure 10L-16, the largest and most complex building at Copan and the symbolic heart of the Acropolis and the city. The East Court is composed

of primarily later construction arranged around an extremely private space consisting of a group of four principal structures (10L-21, 10L-21a, 10L-22 and 10L-22a) surrounded by stepped platforms on three sides. The entire extent of the eastern section of the East Court is unknown because many structures were lost as the Copan River shifted over time and cut into the Acropolis (Gordon 1896,1902).

The isolation and control of movement within the East and West Courts suggest that they contained the most sacred spaces in the city and were accessible only to the highest levels of society. The exclusivity created by the architectural layout of the Acropolis is "the paramount example of the use of sacred space to elevate both the social hierarchy and its legitimating ideology" (Fash 1998:240). Different aspects of the ideology of rulership are directly represented in the architecture and sculpture in each of the three subdivisions of the Principal Group. The West Court, centered on Structure 10L-16, marked the sacred spaces associated with the dynastic founder, Yax K'uk' Mo' and carried the iconography of sacrifice and ancestor worship (Stuart 2004:246). The Great Plaza and Structure 10L-26 focused on the principal events in the dynastic history of Copan with less of a visual, ritual and symbolic focus on the person of the founder (W. Fash 1988:163-164). The East Court developed late in Copan's architectural history in celebration of the spiritual and military power of its rulers at the height of civic power and wealth (M. Miller 1988:183-184).

Excavations into the earliest levels of the Principal Group revealed a remarkable amount of continuity in form, layout, style and sculptural iconography over the course

of the Classic period. The persistence of tradition in the architectural history of Copan maintained the visual and symbolic integrity of the Acropolis as a sacred royal center established by the dynastic founder, Yax K'uk' Mo'. There are two known examples of *talud-tablero* architectural features from the Principal Group. In both instances, *talud-tablero* elements are on the façade of the grandest and most spiritually charged location within the larger complex and the city as a whole, Structures 10L-16 and 10L-26. The following section of the chapter summarizes the architectural development of these two important structures in order to understand the chronological and structural context of the appearance of *talud-tablero* features. Burials, ceramics, hieroglyphic texts and sculpted monuments are presented only as they provide insight into the symbolic function of the structure or any association with Central Mexico.

The Origins of the Acropolis and Structure 10L-16

The bulk of the visible architecture of the Acropolis dates to the Late Classic period, but the complex has a construction history dating well into the Preclassic period (Canuto, Bell and Sharer 2004:4). Recent investigations by the Copan Formative Project directed by the University of Queensland (1992-1997) have attempted to fill in the gap of our understanding of Preclassic Copan but the picture remains cloudy. Years of excavation in the area west of the Principal Group revealed ceramic material, a few perishable residential structures and material remains that point to a level of occupation

and cultural interaction in the valley as early as 1100 BC (Fash 1988:158).[105] There is a significant gap between these early occupations and the first evidence of construction in the Principal Group during the early fifth century AD (Fash and Stuart 1991:151).[106]

Excavations have yet to uncover a significant amount of material dating to the Late Preclassic period and many settlements remain undiscovered, especially those buried beneath the modern town of Copan Ruinas (Fash 1994:71; Fash 1998:226). Archaeologists found some evidence of elite permanent settlement dating between 150 and 400 AD in the area to the west of the Great Plaza (Cheek 1983). However, only one structure within the Principle Group (Platform 10L-1) located on the northwest corner of the Great Plaza contained evidence of Preclassic elite activity and continued interaction with the Highlands and other parts of Mesoamerica (Fash 1994:74; Fash 1998:226; Sharer 2003a:147; Traxler 2004:55).[107] Further excavation in this area may uncover more Preclassic structures and material remains giving us a better

[105] Some of the ceramic material found in the Copan valley and foothills displays Olmec iconography and stylistic qualities, signifying that Copan had a long history of interaction with Central Mexico, the Guatemala Highlands and the Gulf Coast (Viel 1993). The appearance of exotic and luxury goods in burial contexts is a strong indication that Copan was the site of a socially complex and wealthy culture participating in regional interaction as early as 900 BC (Gordon 1898; Fash 1994:66-70).

[106] Limited construction and evidence of periodic flooding suggests that residents frequently relocated in response to the changing flow of the Copan River (Fash 1983,1991; Hall and Viel 2004). Many of these settlements may have been washed away or remain undiscovered.

[107] The primary evidence cited by Fash and others for contact includes cached offerings with pot-belly sculptures commonly found on the Pacific Slope and earthen architecture similar to early architecture from the Highlands and Pacific Slope [see Bove and Medrano Busto 2003].

understanding of the architectural, social and cultural development of Copan during the Late Preclassic period (Hall and Viel 2004; Fash, Fash, et al 2004:82-83).

When the scant architectural and material remains found in the area of the Principal Group are correlated with information provided by retrospective hieroglyphic texts it appears as if Copan had a defined civic center before 400 AD (Cheek 1983; Schele 1986; Stuart 1986, 1989, 2004).[108] However, preparation for the construction of the Principal Group did not begin until 400 AD when the valley floor on the west bank of the Copan River was leveled to support simple earth and cobblestone constructions (Sharer, Fash, et al 1999:221-222,229-235; Sharer, Traxler, et al. 1999:8-9). It is unclear whether these early structures were constructed by earlier rulers or by the young dynastic founder, Yax K'uk' Mo' (Sedat and Lopez 2004:99). A massive surge in new construction occurred between 400 and 425 AD that included three distinct architectural groups, the so-called "mini-acropolis", a residential and administrative complex or "palace", and a dynastic shrine/ballcourt complex (Sharer 1999a:10; Sharer, Fash, et al 1999:221-222; Sharer, Traxler, et al 1999; Traxler 2003) [Fig. 83]. These three construction areas covered most earlier structures to form the foundation of formal elite

[108] Our minimal understanding of Copan's pre-dynastic history comes from six Late Classic inscriptions that offer retrospective accounts of historic and mythic events prior to the arrival of Yax K'uk' Mo' in 426 AD (Fash and Stuart 1991, Stuart 1992, 2004) (see footnote #29). These later texts also record still unknown early rulers as protagonists in period endings, accessions and the possible civic foundation at a location outside the Copan Valley (Fash 1994:85-88; Stuart 2004). Several of the pre-dynastic texts suggest "explicit historical connections to the Peten...as early as 8.6.0.0.0 [159 AD], nearly 280 years before the time of a far better-known political 'outsider', K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo'" (Stuart 2004:221).

architectural complexes. These three architectural groups eventually merged into the Principal Group, a single architectural feature that marked the civic and sacred center of Copan for the duration of the Classic period.

Pre-dynastic buildings located in the area beneath the mini-acropolis were covered by a low stucco-finished platform, nicknamed Yune, approximately 70m^2 in size (Sedat and Lopez 1999:16). The platform was accessible by terraced stairways on its west and supported a couple of patio groups that contained cobblestone and earthen architecture (Sharer, Fash, et al. 1999:239-240; Traxler 2003:48-49).[109] The Yune superstructures were built of solid earth using local techniques and materials similar to architecture found at other sites in the Copan Valley (Fash and Fash 2000:447; Canuto et al. 2004:43). The first version of the platform supported architecture similar in style to earlier structures at Copan but of a larger scale, a more formal organization and an orientation based on the cardinal directions (Sedat 1996:19; Sedat and Lopez 1999). During the first phase of construction, three structures (Higo, Uranio, Kan) were arranged in a pseudo-triadic pattern on the northern portion of the platform (Sedat and Lopez 2004:86). This structural layout and orientation was also found in the earliest

[109] Archaeologists have had difficulty obtaining accurate carbon-dating for the earliest versions of Yune Platform. Following the conjunctive approach, tentative dates are drawn from "a variety of epigraphic, iconographic and bioanthropological sources" (Sedat and Lopez 2004:96). The early and middle phases of construction are generally correlated with the twenty year reign of the founder, Yax K'uk' Mo, (c. AD 416-437) while the last phase is associated with the reign of his son and successor, Popol Hol (after c. AD 437) (Stuart 2004). Stuart's estimation of the founder's reign is in line with the estimated span of use for Hunal, the structure presumed to contain his body (Sharer, Fash, et al. 1999; Sedat and Lopez 2004:97).

versions of the North Acropolis at Tikal and other Lowland sites suggesting a degree of connection between the two regions (Sedat and Lopez 2004:97). One of the structures, Uranio, contained a single unidentified elite burial suggesting that the Acropolis served as a royal burial ground since its inception (Traxler 2003:52; Bell, Sharer, et al. 2004).[110]

Architectural and material evidence suggest that the function of the Yune group differed from earlier construction and was designed as a formal and segregated space for elite ritual activity and burials (Traxler 2004:58). The earliest structures of the Acropolis were eclectic in style, construction technique and materials. The very first buildings of the Acropolis were primarily earthen structures (Sharer, Traxler, et al. 1999; Traxler 1993:48). The earthen architecture at Copan is similar in basic form and some construction techniques to architecture found in the Copan Valley, the Guatemala Highlands and the Southeastern region (Kidder, et al 1946; Cheek 1977a; Canuto et al. 2004). Architects at Copan retained the local technical convention of building a solid earthen substructure made of local materials; but applied an innovative technique to finish the façade (Traxler 2004:58; Sedat and Lopez 2004:88). Covering the exterior with a mixture of clay and red pigment instead of the traditional Highland finish of *talpetate* (crushed volcanic ash) mimicked the smooth red stucco finish common on Lowland architecture (Traxler 2003,2004). As at Tikal, architects drew from all

[110] The individual interred must have been of great importance as three subsequent constructions marked this burial with the final version (Maravilla) retaining access until the sixth century (Sharer, Fash, et al 1999:240; Traxler 2003:52; Sedat and Lopez 2004:86).

available techniques, forms and materials in order to present a specific exterior appearance probably intended to evoke an association with the architecture of the Lowlands. From the first moment of construction, Copan's architects embraced technical, formal and aesthetic innovations without rejecting well-established local architectural conventions.

By 425 AD, most of the perishable structures of the Yune platform had been replaced by more permanent masonry structures (Sharer, Fash, et al 1999:240). The expanded Acropolis retained the eclectic quality of its first incarnation. Most of the structures were constructed, designed and finished in the architectural style common in the Lowlands; however, there were also a few cobblestone structures typical of the Southeastern Region and a single example of the *talud-tablero* features common in Central Mexico (Sharer, Traxler, et al. 1999). At some point after 425 AD, a small masonry structure, known as Hunal, was erected at the center of the Yune Platform directly above two earlier adobe structures Cab and Bac (Sedat and Lopez 2004:87) [Fig. 13].[111] The superstructure was razed for later construction but its remains show it consisted of at least three rooms with red stucco interiors probably covered by a wooden

[111] Located in the center of this complex was a west-facing earthen platform (Cab) that probably originally supported a perishable superstructure. The function of this platform/structure is unknown, but it and its expansion (Bac) eventually became the foundation of the Hunal Structure (Sedat and Lopez 2004:87). A badly destroyed chamber (known as the Bac Chamber) of unknown function was found on the northwestern corner of the Cab/Bac structure. The location of the tomb was of some significance as it was the site of several remodeling efforts and subsequent burials, including the tomb for a wealthy female known as the Margarita Tomb (Sedat and Lopez 2004:87-88).

roof (Sedat and Lopez 2004:89-90). The platform had access from two stairways on the east and north sides suggesting that Hunal was a square radial structure. Unfortunately, the western and southern sides were badly destroyed during remodeling so there is no conclusive evidence of this plan (Taube 2004:266). Both structures exhibit *talud-tablero* features on their substructures. The platform was surrounded by a drainage system that would have allowed for the accumulation of a shallow puddle of water around the base of the structure (Sedat and Lopez 1999:17). Another unique feature of Hunal is the use of *talud-tablero* elements on the façade and stair balustrades (without cornices) of its substructure (Sharer, Traxler, et al. 1999; Sharer 2003a:159-160). Despite the inclusion of *talud-tablero* features, Hunal was constructed using masonry techniques and a stucco finish similar to the architecture of the Lowlands and not the Highland and Southeastern earth and stone construction of the earlier Acropolis structures (Traxler 2004). Hunal represents a conscious departure from local construction techniques, forms and materials that strongly indicate that its patron, Yax K'uk' Mo' or Popol Hol, "had closer ties with the Maya Lowlands than with the Maya Highlands" (Traxler 2004:59). As discussed in Chapter 4, the association may be more specific, as Hunal is markedly similar in construction technique, materials and finish to several structures with *talud-tablero* façades found in the Mundo Perdido and 6C-XVI complex at Tikal (Laporte and Fialko 1990).

Intrusive into the floor of the north room of Hunal was a vaulted masonry tomb chamber oriented along the north-south axis of the structure (Sharer, Fash, et al

1999:241-242; Sedat and Lopez 2004:91). The tomb is given a tentative date between AD 400-450 based on stratigraphy, ceramic style and epigraphic dates (Bell, Canuto, et al. 2004:133).[112] The so-called Hunal Tomb contained the body of an older elite male (55-70 years old) extended on a stone slab surrounded by a wealth of offerings including objects that evoke a connection with Central Mexico and Tikal (Bell, Canuto, et al. 2004:133) [Fig. 84].[113] Copan had a long history of relationships with several regions and cultures of Mesoamerica and the "international assemblage" of ceramics found in the Hunal tomb may "reflect the sociopolitical associations for the tomb's occupant" (Reents-Budet, et al. 2004:169) [Fig. 85]. The occupant of the Hunal Tomb is

[112] Natural forces and human intervention in ancient times partially damaged the tomb's architecture and disturbed the skeleton and material contents making it difficult to provide an exact date.

[113] An elaborate shell headdress placed near the skull and a shell collar around the neck were similar in form and material to one found in Burial 10 at Tikal and worn by the tomb's occupant, Yax Nuun Ahiin I, on the sides of Tikal's Stela 31 (Coggins 1979a; Martin and Grube 2000; Bell, Canuto, et al. 2004:133). The shell-plated headdress and collar are costume elements typically associated with Mexican warriors, and over time became the identifying costume of both Yax Nuun Ahiin I and Yax K'uk' Mo' (Coggins 1988; Fash and Fash 2000; Stuart 2000; Sharer 2003a). Twenty-four ceramic vessels of both Mexican and Maya forms surrounded the body in association with other typical burial goods including jade jewelry, stingray spines, jaguar teeth, animal bones and possibly a wooden shield (Bell, Canuto, et al. 2004:133-134).

Instrumental Neutron Activation Analysis (INAA) performed by Dorie Reents-Budet and Ron Bishop of the Smithsonian Institution tested the chemical composition of the vessels recovered from the Hunal Tomb. Chemical and stylistic analysis revealed that all of the vessels dated to AD 400-450 and displayed a variety of chemical signatures that represented four regions of production: Tikal, the Guatemalan Highlands, Western Honduras and Central Mexico (Sharer 2003a:150; Reents-Budet, et al. 2004:161). Of the twenty-four vessels tested, only three (two Thin Orange ring stand bowls and a stuccoed and painted jar) were produced in Central Mexico. Similar to ceramics found in Burials 22 and 10 at Tikal, most of the ceramics with "foreign" forms such as the cylinder tripod were actually imported from the central Peten or more specifically, Tikal (Reents-Budet et al. 2004:173).

believed to be the dynastic founder Yax K'uk' Mo' based on several lines of evidence including: the stratigraphic location of the tomb, tomb contents, texts and iconography on burial goods, the orientation and sculptural programs of subsequent architecture, and portraits found on later monuments, (Bell, et al. 1999; Sharer, Fash, et al. 1999; Sharer, Traxler, et al. 1999; Fash and Fash 2000; Martin and Grube 2000: 193; Stuart 2004). Recent theories supported by biological, chemical, artistic, architectural and epigraphic data uncovered in the excavation of the early Acropolis do confirm a superficial allusion to Central Mexico but also reveal a stronger and more direct connection with the central Peten region, particularly Tikal (Reents-Budet 2004:188-189; Buikstra et al. 2004:211; Stuart 2004:247; Sharer 2003a,2004:300).[114]

[114] The ethnic identity and place of origin of Yax K'uk' Mo' has long been a point of debate. His portraits and burial costume depict him wearing the costume of a Mexican warrior, he was buried within a structure finished with *talud-tablero* features and his tomb contained Mexican ceramic forms and symbols. All of these lines of evidence appear to point to a direct connection between Yax K'uk' Mo' and Central Mexico. However, under further investigation of the skeleton, funerary architecture, iconography and ceramics, the true "Mexicanness" of Yax K'uk' Mo' has been called into question.

Strontium isotope analysis of the skeleton in the Hunal Tomb suggests that the individual was not a Copan native and may have come from the Peten region of the Lowlands (Buikstra, et al 2004:210). The skeleton had fractures on its right arm, sternum and left shoulder resulting from blunt-force trauma probably incurred in battle or in the ballgame, two important institutions of Lowland Maya rulership (Buikstra 2004:196-201,211). The tomb shows evidence of re-entry for ritual purposes after the decomposition of the body including the dressing of the bones with cinnabar (Bell, Traxler, et al 1999:33; Sedat and Lopez 2004:91). A large textile or mat was placed beneath the body in a conventional presentation symbolic of the political power of a ruler. The overall treatment of the body during and after burial is firmly in line with Lowland funerary practice. Architecture built by Yax K'uk' Mo', including the *talud-tablero* substructure of Hunal, bear a strong similarity in form, construction technique, layout, finish and function to Tikal's North Acropolis and Mundo Perdido (Coe 1990; Laporte 1992; Sharer, Traxler, et al 1999). Chemical analysis of the ceramics found in the Hunal Tomb revealed a variety of ceramic types but with most vessels produced at

Little is known about the function of the early structures of the Yune platform; however, the group clearly functioned as a mortuary shrine after the incorporation of the Hunal Tomb. The construction of Hunal established the architectural center of the Acropolis and the symbolic heart of the city as the sacred space occupied by the dynastic founder (Sharer 2003a:151-152; Taube 2004:265). Hunal remained the principal site for veneration of the founder despite the construction of several new structures on the Yune platform including a large range-style stone structure (Wilin) finished with Peten-style apron-molding (Sedat and Lopez 2004:92). The final version of the Yune Platform included the expansion of Wilin, the remodeling of other existing structures and the replacement of Hunal by a structure nicknamed Yehnal [Fig. 86]. Yehnal replicated the presumed radial plan of Hunal but differed in its orientation, exterior style and function permanently altering the visual character of the Acropolis in a way that replicated the royal architecture of powerful Lowland cities (Sharer, Fash, et al 1999:241-242; Sedat and Lopez 2004:93; Sharer 2004:304). Yehnal faced west, an orientation retained on all subsequent constructions including the final version of 10L-16. Yehnal did not display any *talud-tablero* features but instead featured apron-molding and modeled stucco sculpture following Lowland conventions of architectural

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Copan or imported from the Peten (Reents-Budet et al 2004). Although there are no mentions of Yax K'uk' Mo' in the texts of Tikal, or Siyaj K'ak' and Yax Nuun Ahiin I in the texts of Copan, epigraphic evidence infers a historical and political connection between Copan and Tikal (Stuart 2004:247). Hieroglyphic texts recording the arrival of Yax K'uk' Mo' at Copan in AD 426 and the dynastic founding closely follow the narrative of Siyaj K'ak's arrival at Tikal in AD 378 and the dynastic re-founding under Yax Nuun Ahiin I (Martin and Grube 2000: 29-31,192-193; Stuart 2000).

style (Sedat 1996:21-22) [Fig. 87,88].[115] The interior of Yehnal included a large vaulted chamber placed directly above the northern edge of the Hunal Tomb (Sedat and Lopez 2004:95). The chamber did not contain a burial, but showed evidence of extensive burning suggesting that it was the site of ritual activity, possibly a fire ceremony related to the founder buried in the Hunal Tomb (Davis-Salazar and Bell 2000; Taube 2004:277).

The Yune Platform and its structures expanded toward the south to form the base of a large raised platform (Witik Platform) that eventually covered the original version of the Acropolis (Sedat and Lopez 2004:96). A new structure nicknamed Margarita was built by Copan's second ruler, Popol Hol, around AD 450 as a shrine for his father, Yax K'uk' Mo' (Martin and Grube 2000:194) [Fig. 89]. Margarita completely covered Yehnal and became the new structural center of the Acropolis. The terraces of substructure were finished with apron-molding and covered with red stucco sculpture (Sedat 1996:23; Sedat and Lopez 1999:18-19) [Figs.90,91]. The sculptural program consisted of large panels with glyphic representations of the name of the founder in a cosmological framework, in essence labeling the structure as a personification of Yax K'uk' Mo' (Fash 1998:227-228; Fash and Fash 1996:130; Sharer 2003a:155). At the heart of Margarita and intrusive to Yehnal was an axial tomb complex consisting of two large vaulted chambers accompanied by a secondary burial.

[115] The stucco panels depict an enigmatic emblem that may represent an aspect of the Sun God, the name of the founder, or a reference to an earlier ruler, ancestor or mythic deity (Martin and Grube 2000:195; Stuart 2004:225; Taube 2004:277).

The upper chamber contained no skeleton but a variety of burial goods including five ceramic vessels produced outside the Copan Valley (Reents-Budet, et al. 2004:176).[116] Included in this offering was a spectacular lidded cylinder tripod vessel nicknamed "The Dazzler" [Fig. 92].[117] The stucco surface of the tripod is painted with an image of a "*talud-tablero* style platform (similar to the Hunal structure) supporting an anthropomorphized temple with a goggle-eyed face and plumed arms" (Bell, Canuto, et al 2004:138). The iconography of the Dazzler has clear associations with the founder and his burial shrine; however, the exact meaning of the imagery is unknown.[118] The lower chamber of the Margarita Tomb contained the skeleton of an elderly female surrounded by a remarkable wealth of offerings several of which displayed Mexican features (Buikstra et al 2004) [Fig.93].[119] Objects with foreign forms or iconography are

[116] The upper chamber contained a large quantity of offerings including jade jewelry, ceramics, textiles, slate and organic materials (Bell, Traxler, et al 1999:30-31; Bell, Canuto, et al 2004:137-138).

[117] The origins of this vessel have been subject to debate as the form and proportion of the vessel are markedly similar to cylinder tripods found at Teotihuacán and Kaminaljuyu but the imagery is distinctly Maya in subject and style. INAA analysis of the Dazzler revealed an "enigmatic" chemical signature uncommon among Maya samples and with a "low probability of chemical similarity" to Central Mexico or the Gulf Coast (Reents-Budet et al. 2004:179). Reents-Budet et al. have hypothesized that the vessel itself was made in Central Mexico but finished locally by a master artist schooled in both Maya and Mexican aesthetic conventions (Reents-Budet et al. 2004:179-180). Other ceramic pieces and organic objects were finished using traditionally Mexican techniques such as painted stucco and incising, but like the Dazzler, were decorated using local fine-line painting techniques to depict Maya iconography in conventional Maya style.

[118] The personification of Hunal may represent a literal embodiment of the structure by the founder or his fiery resurrection (Sedat 1997; Sharer, Fash, et al 1999; Sharer, Traxler, et al 1999; Taube 2004:278).

[119] As in the Hunal tomb, the body was laid out on a mat and placed on a stone slab (Sharer, Fash, et al 1999:242). The body was fully dressed with shell and jade sandals,

similar to many found in the Hunal tomb, visually reinforcing a physical and/or symbolic relationship between the woman buried in the Margarita Tomb and the founder, Yax K'uk' Mo'.[120] A secondary burial (95-1) was placed in the floor just west of the Margarita Tomb before the construction of the upper offering chamber around AD 450. The adult male skeleton nicknamed the "Tlaloc Warrior" and his offerings were bundled between two woven mats and laid out along the central axis of the Margarita structure (Bell, Canuto, et al. 2004:143; Buikstra et al 2004:203). The body was surrounded by a variety of objects and costume elements similar to those of a Mexican warrior including two shell rings placed over the eyes and a bundle of obsidian

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dress and jewelry and posthumously coated with a layer of cinnabar (Bell, Traxler et al 1999:31). A variety of offerings surrounded the body including jade, shell and pearl objects, bone needles, and stingray spines (Bell, Canuto et al 2004:139-140). The burial also included sixteen ceramic vessels. Of the ten vessels tested using INAA analysis, nine were produced locally and one was imported from Central Mexico (Reents-Budet et al, 2004:180-181). Two more vessels, an orange ring-stand bowl and a painted stucco ring-stand bowl, remain unattributed by Reents-Budet and Bishop, but may have been imported to Copan from the Gulf Coast (Reents-Budet, et al. 2004:181). Many of the objects within the tomb were intentionally grouped or bundled and presented as unique assemblages probably associated with specific ritual activities. One of these assemblages contained two bundled iron/pyrite mirrors decorated with painted stucco designs that depict Mexican iconography including a standing figure wearing a feathered serpent headdress and a trapeze and ray motif (Bell, Canuto et al 2004:139-140). Unlike the Dazzler, the form, materials, style and decoration of these mirrors conform to Mexican conventions suggesting that they were imported from Mexico as complete objects.

[120] There is no known epigraphic reference to the woman buried in the Margarita Tomb so her identity remains uncertain. However, the wealth of the burial and its central location in proximity to the Hunal Tomb strongly suggest that she was the widow of the founder and the mother of his successor, Popol Hol (Sharer, Traxler et al 1999; Martin and Grube 2000:196; Sharer 2003a). Osteological analysis showed that she was a native of Copan, at least by adolescence, supporting the theory that Yax K'uk' Mo' gained control at least in part through intermarriage into a local elite family (Buikstra 1997; Sharer 1997a,2004:305; Sharer, Fash, et al 1999; Buikstra 2004:210).

darts (Bell, Canuto, et al 2004:143).[121] The offerings included three ceramic vessels of both Peten and Mexican forms decorated with Maya iconography rendered in traditional Maya style. Despite his Mexican costume and paraphernalia and the presence of Mexican ceramic forms in his tomb, strontium isotope analysis of the skeleton showed that the man buried here (like Yax K'uk' Mo') was not a Copan native, but probably came from the Peten or the Yucatan area (Buikstra 2004:210).

Margarita remained the architectural center of the acropolis until it was replaced by a larger structure known as Rosalila around 520 AD. Copan's tenth ruler, known as Moon Jaguar, built Rosalila in commemoration of the founder whose tomb lay below (Martin and Grube 2000:198-199; Stuart 2004) [Fig.94].[122] The structure had a long history of use stretching over 150 years until Copan's twelfth king, known as Smoke Imix, terminated Rosalila around 690 AD. When discovered by Ricardo Agurcia Fasquelle in 1989, Rosalila was completely intact and exhibited an extraordinary degree of structural and exterior preservation.[123] Rosalila was centered along the north-south axis of the Acropolis and faced west retaining the orientation established by its predecessors, Hunal, Yehnal, and Margarita (Agurcia Fasquelle 2004:102). The

[121] The burial costume was similar to an earlier burial (V-6) located just east of Ballcourt I suggesting that the warrior burial represented a formal assemblage type probably with specific symbolic meaning also related to the ballgame (Cheek and Viel 1983; Fash and Fash 2000:443-445).

[122] The structure is associated with Moon Jaguar based on a dedicatory text located on Rosalila's stairway that records the date 9.6.17.3.2, February 21, AD 571. The date is reconstructed, but if correct places the dedication of the structure firmly within the reign of Moon Jaguar.

[123] After its termination, Rosalila was protected and buried as a whole structure within the substructure of its successor, Purpula (Agurcia Fasquelle and Valdes 1994:69-82).

structure itself consists of a small substructure (Azul) topped by a superstructure finished with a rich sculptural program [Fig. 95].[124] Agurcia Fasquelle interprets the sculptural program of the second and third levels as the conjuring of the founder from the underworld into the building (the sacred mountain) through the mouth of the vision serpent (Agurcia Fasquelle 2004:109). This interpretation is in line with the proposed function of the structure as a site of ancestral conjuring as evidenced by objects found in the interior rooms such as stingray spines, incense burners, knives and bones (paraphernalia typically associated with ritual sacrifice and bloodletting), and the iconography of the structure's sculptural program (Agurcia Fasquelle 2004:104: Taube 2004:283). All together the exterior of Rosalila is covered with a typically Maya representation of the cosmological symbolism that unites Copan's patron god, K'inich Ajaw, with the spirit of the dynastic founder, Yax K'uk' Mo' (Agurcia Fasquelle 1997; Martin and Grube 2000:198). This elaborate facade reanimated the sacred space at the center of the acropolis directly above the tomb of the founder and his wife and reestablished the vital connection between the current rulers and the ancestors responsible for their political power.

[124] Along the substructure were giant emblems of the jaguar aspect of the Sun God surrounded by a feathered shield (Agurcia Fasquelle 1997). The lower level of the structure displays seven panels representing the celestial bird aspect of the Sun God, K'inich Ajaw, wearing a headdress that combines features of a quetzal (*k'uk*) and a macaw (*mo'*). This composite motif refers to both the Sun God and the founder of the dynasty, Yax K'uk' Mo' (Agurcia Fasquelle 2004:107). The middle level presents a complex program containing symbols of the Sun God, serpents and a variety of figures identified as deities and rulers. The uppermost level also carries the serpent motif but in association with a *witz* monster that marks the structure as a sacred mountain and personified incense burners (M. Miller 1986; Schele and Freidel 1990; Taube 2000, 2004:265).

Structure 10L-26

The earliest construction beneath Structure 10L-26, nicknamed Yax, sits on a floor that dates to the early fifth century (Cheek 1983) [Fig. 83]. Stratigraphic, textual, and iconographic records suggest that Yax was one of the first structures built by the founder, Yax K'uk' Mo' (Williamson 1996). Yax was a stone structure built using the Lowland construction technique of a rubble core finished by a masonry veneer (W. Fash 1998; Williamson 1996; Traxler 2003:54). The platform originally supported a superstructure that was eventually razed to accommodate a new structure. Archaeologists have not been able to determine the style of Yax platform as it was poorly preserved. However, it most likely had a traditional apron-molding finish based on the architectural style of the structure above it (Motmot) and the concurrent version of the ballcourt (W. Fash 1998; Fash, et al. 2004).

Copan's second ruler, Popol Hol, built the second incarnation of Structure 10L-26, known as Motmot, in conjunction with the remodeling of the Acropolis that included the construction of Margarita (W. Fash 1998:230-231) [Fig 96]. Motmot retained the plan and exterior finish of Yax but displayed a more embellished façade consisting of several sky bands and representations of GI, the Sun God (Sharer, Fash, et al 1999:243-244). Placed along the central axis of Motmot was a cylindrical burial containing the remains of a single young female and several offerings including three decapitated male skulls (W. Fash 1994:93; Martin and Grube 2000:194; Buikstra et al.

2004:202-203).[125] The identity of the woman buried beneath Motmot remains a mystery but osteological analysis suggests that she was originally from Tikal, Seibal or another location in the Peten region (Buikstra et al. 2004:210).[126] The deposition and burning of this burial and its contents may have been recorded on the Motmot stone, the capstone that sealed the cylindrical tomb (Fash, Fash et al 2004:74) [Fig. 97]. The Motmot stone, the earliest hieroglyphic known text from Copan, records the passing of the 9.0.0.0.0 *bak'tun* ending overseen by Popol Hol possibly in the company of his father, Yax K'uk' Mo' (Martin and Grube 2000:194; Stuart 2004:241)[127]. The imagery of the Motmot stone depicts the portraits of the founder and his son seated facing each other opposite a

[125] Cylindrical burials are rare in the Maya region and more common at Teotihuacán, suggesting that Copan's early rulers were familiar with Central Mexican burial practices (Manzanilla 1993; Sharer, Fash, et al 1999:244). The reason for the appearance of these burials, the identity of their occupants and their function remains unknown; however, similar round burials, cremations and ritual deposits were also found at Tikal and Kaminaljuyu (Coggins 1975).

[126] The woman must have been of importance as the burial was revisited after interment and shows evidence of burning consistent with a dedicatory offering possibly associated with divination or supernatural mediation (Fash, Fash et al 2004:68-70; Fash and Fash 2000,1996; Sharer, Traxler et al 1999).

[127] The 9.0.0.0.0 *bak'tun* ending was an important date in Copan's history, mentioned in five inscriptions: Stelae J, 15, 28, 63 and the Motmot stone. Of these monuments only the Motmot stone is a contemporary record, all of the others are retrospective accounts from later monuments. The role of Yax K'uk' Mo' in this ceremony is unclear. Stela 28, 63 and the Motmot stone cite Popol Hol as the protagonist overseeing the passing of the *bak'tun*; however, later monuments tend to emphasize the role of Yax K'uk' Mo' in this ritual "as if the founder hero and the 9.0.0.0.0 date were somehow combined as paired elements within the local historical narrative" (Stuart 2004:240-44). It is also unclear whether or not Yax K'uk' Mo' was alive during the reign of his son; however, according to Stuart, the text and imagery of the Motmot stone, Xukpi stone, and Stela 63 strongly suggest that "both the founder and his son played key roles on the celebration of the Period ending" (Stuart 2004:245).

central hieroglyphic text and within a quatrefoil frame.[128] Like the façade sculpture of Margarita, the Motmot stone places the person of the founder (here with his son) in the context of a supernatural domain in order to stress his status as an influential ancestor (Fash 1998:228). The placement of this type of image beneath the earliest version of 10L-26 established the structure's long-term function as a dynastic shrine and a point of access to the otherworld necessary for ancestor veneration (Sharer, Fash, et al 1999:244).

Motmot shares a plaster floor with the earliest version of the ballcourt (Ballcourt I) suggesting that two structures were built around the same time and probably in association with each other (Sharer, Traxler et al 1999) [Figs. 89,98]. Giant stucco birds with feathered serpent heads, markedly similar in imagery to sculpture found at Teotihuacán decorated the facade of Ballcourt I (Fash 1998:231; Fash, Fash et al. 2004:74). The "Mexicanness" of the structure appears to have been reserved for the façade iconography as the architecture of Ballcourt I and Motmot were built according to Peten construction techniques and stylistic conventions. Furthermore, both structures also displayed iconographic elements and hieroglyphic emblems common in Maya architectural sculptural programs suggesting that the Mexican symbolism worked in conjunction with established Maya iconography. In thinking about the Mexican visual qualities of the ballcourt, it is interesting to me that the standard form of the "playing

[128] Both figures are depicted as Maya kings surrounded by the traditional trappings of rulership and rendered according to Lowland stylistic conventions (Sharer 2004:301). Both text and image are designed to convey the status of Popol Hol as the legitimate descendant and heir to the founder, Yax K'uk' Mo' (Stuart 2004:240-241).

space" of a Lowland ballcourt so closely resembles the basic forms of the *talud* and *tablero*. It would be extremely difficult to show whether this is a coincidence or another example of Maya reinterpretation of the *talud-tablero* form, here used on a monumental scale to represent a very Maya space. As discussed in Chapter 4, there are so many symbolic connections between the Maya use of *talud-tablero* style and the primary places associated with the underworld as a place of rebirth, the ballgame and warrior prowess, that this interpretation should at least be considered.

When paired with the first versions of structures surrounding the northern limits of the Great Plaza, the construction of Motmot and the ballcourt framed the area that would become the most publicly accessible part of the Principal Group (Fash, Fash, et al. 2004:74). The original orientation survived until the fall of the dynasty and defined all subsequent expansions of the Great Plaza through the Classic period. Structure 10L-26 was the site for multiple renovations that continued to reinforce its role as a site of ancestor veneration for the dynasty founded by Yax K'uk' Mo' [Fig. 12]. Motmot's superstructure was razed and the bulk of its exterior sculpture destroyed in the ritual "killing" of the structure before its burial beneath new construction called Papagayo (Fash, Fash, et al. 2004:76) [Fig. 99]. Papagayo consisted of a two-roomed superstructure in front of a terraced pyramid known as Mascarones that together replicated and expanded on the plan of Motmot. The location, style and material contents of Papagayo reinforced its spatial association with the period of dynastic

origins.[129] The finished version of Papagayo displayed a single *tablero* on its front façade in addition to stucco masks and sky-bands along its terraces that marked the structure as a cosmic location (Strömsvik 1935; Baudez 1983; Fash 1998: 234-235; Fash, Fash, et al. 2004:78). As was the case with Hunal, the *talud-tablero* features of Papagayo coexist with Maya architectural forms and sculptural iconography. Papagayo remained unaltered and active as a sacred space for over two centuries when it was ultimately buried and remodeled in association with the death and entombment of Ruler 12 in 695AD (Fash 2001:105).

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a selective summary of the early architectural development of four cities with architectural and material remains that suggest varying degrees of interaction and/or association with Central Mexico, particularly the city of Teotihuacán. All of the cities investigated also had a direct political connection with

[129] Once completed, Stela 63 was erected in the interior of Papagayo in commemoration of the 9.0.0.0.0 *bak'tun* ending as overseen by Popol Hol in the company of his father (Fash, Williamson, et al.1992; Stuart 2004:241). The text of Stela 63 reiterated the visual message of the Motmot stone buried below confirming years of speculation about the father-son relationship between Yax K'uk' Mo' and Popol Hol (Stuart, Grube, et al 1989:8; Fash and Stuart 1991:151; Stuart 2004:230-231). Copan's fourth ruler, Ku Ix, refurbished Papagayo and its interior chamber adding a hieroglyphic step with a text that connects him to the protagonists of Stela 63 (Martin and Grube 2000:196). The step text also contains the glyph *pu*, a possible reference to "a place of reeds" or Tollan, a concept believed to be associated with Teotihuacán (Stuart 2000; 2004). This textual reference continues a pattern of association between the founder and Central Mexico, but again conveyed through traditional Maya forms of representation (in this case hieroglyphs), media and contexts.

Tikal, specifically its role in the installation or place of origin of intrusive rulers that changed the course of dynastic history. The fourth and fifth centuries were a time of great changes that altered the political landscape of the Maya Lowlands for the duration of the Classic period. The so-called *entrada* or "arrival of strangers" at Tikal in 378 AD is one of the defining events of the Early Classic period. The exact nature of this event that included the arrival of Mexicans in the Maya region is still under debate, but it marks a turning point in Maya history where independent polities such as Uaxactun, Rio Azul and Copan began to fall under the political sway of more powerful cities or "superstates" such as Tikal (Martin and Grube 1994,1995,2000).[130] The dynastic changes of the fourth and fifth centuries were accompanied by a period of civic growth and restructuring at all four sites. Each of these cities experienced a major architectural overhaul in the years following the emergence of a new dynasty that in essence re-centered the city. In all cases, the architectural style of the built environment, in particular the city's most sacred spaces, was manipulated in a way that reflected changes in the political order that sometimes included a degree of visible association

[130] The circumstances and participants in the "arrival event" are still unclear, but iconographic and epigraphic evidence from Tikal and nearby Holmul/La Sufricaya suggest that it included a Mexican army (Stuart 2000; Estrada-Belli 2002). Hopefully future excavations and studies will reveal whether the role of this military escort and whether or not it carried a Mexican ruler, the enigmatic figure of Siyaj K'ak' and/or the usurper Yax Nuun Ahiin I into Tikal. In any case, the events and consequences of the *entrada* linked the political fortunes of Tikal to several Lowland cities including Uaxactun and Rio Azul (Stuart 2000; Martin and Grube 2000). Connections between the dynasties of Tikal and Rio Azul remain unclear, but are suggested by the iconography of tomb murals and a few poorly understood textual references. The exact role of Tikal in the dynastic foundation of Copan is also uncertain although Late Classic texts and osteological analysis imply the superpower may have been the homeland of its founder Yax K'uk' Mo' (see footnote #114).

with the sacred landscape of Central Mexico.

The data presented in this chapter will be used in Chapter Four to track patterns in style and context in order to uncover the possible meaning(s) of the *talud-tablero* style within the local architectural histories of the chosen sites. This study does not seek to find the point of origin of talud-tablero architecture or an understanding of the meaning of the *talud-tablero* architectural style throughout Mesoamerica. Instead, I hope to locate the place of *talud-tablero* within the context of local architectural history in an attempt to understand the internal impetus for the incorporation of innovative foreign stylistic elements into a well-established and highly conservative architectural canon.

CHAPTER FOUR
An Assessment of the Meaning of the Talud-Tablero Style in the Early Built Environments of Tikal, Uaxactun, Rio Azul and Copan

Introduction

The appearance of *talud-tablero* architectural elements in the built environment of several Maya cities is a line of evidence that confirms David Stuart's assertion that interaction with Central Mexico, particularly the city of Teotihuacán, strongly impacted Maya elite culture and politics throughout the Classic period. According to Stuart, evidence of contact is seen in the material record of selected cities as a fusion of traditional symbolism and ideology with "the formidable power and memory of that foreign city [Teotihuacán]" in particular as a sacred place of origin commonly referred to as *Tollan* (Stuart 2000). In the effort to understand the nature of intercultural interaction, Stuart and others have focused almost exclusively on the appearance of Mexican symbols in the iconographic and hieroglyphic records. "Readable icons" in both text and image have been viewed as the most objective and therefore most accurately interpreted strings of evidence of cultural "influence" and/or political connections between Central Mexico and the Maya region (Coggins 1975; Stone 1989; Schele and Freidel 1990; Proskouriakoff 1993; Stuart 2000, 2004). There has been little attention given to architectural style in the history of the debate on the nature of Mexican/Maya interaction and its imprint on Maya culture. Scholars have rarely attempted to analyze the role of the architectural style in evoking real and/or metaphorical connections between Central Mexico and the Maya region although *talud-*

tablero architecture has often been cited as evidence of intercultural contact. When considered, architectural style has been viewed as an emblem of ethnic and/or cultural identity. In other words, scholars have approached architectural style as they have iconography and text – as a symbol – specifically as a signifier of a specific lineage, ethnic and/or cultural group. It is my contention that there is not a direct correlation between architectural style and cultural, ethnic or familial identity; style is more dynamic in structure, varied in application, and complex in meaning than this equation allows.

The following chapter attempts to establish and ultimately interpret the meaning behind the incorporation of *talud-tablero* stylistic elements into the Maya built environment during the Early Classic period. Using the architectural histories presented in Chapter Three, I track patterns in the composition of *talud-tablero* forms on independent structures and larger complexes. Through this analysis, I hope to determine the relative context of foreign *talud-tablero* stylistic elements in relation to local architectural conventions and the development of the built environment as a whole. The study of local patterns of composition and context provides valuable insight into broader cultural meaning(s) of the *talud-tablero* style through an understanding of the intended experience of structures that display *talud-tablero* features. The concluding paragraphs of the chapter present an assessment of regional patterns in the context and meaning of the *talud-tablero* style. Ultimately, what emerges is an understanding of why Maya rulers chose to display elements of Mexican architectural style on structures

that marked some of their most sacred spaces. Particular consideration is given to the relationship between architectural style, intercultural interaction, the institutions of rulership and the changing political landscape at the dawn of the Classic period.

Interpreting the Meaning of the *Talud-Tablero* Style at Four Maya Cities

The appearance of *talud-tablero* stylistic elements is extremely rare in the architectural record of the Maya region throughout the Classic period. Little is known about the early history and civic development of most Maya cities making it especially difficult to develop a complete picture of the place and meaning of *talud-tablero* style architecture in Early Classic Maya society. The four cities chosen for this study, Tikal, Uaxactun, Rio Azul and Copan, are relatively unique in their long excavation histories, extensive hieroglyphic and iconographic records, and comprehensive architectural sequences spanning the entire course of Maya history. These four cities are the focus of investigation because Mexican symbols and/or forms appear in their material, iconographic, textual and/or architectural record during the Early Classic. As such, they are the most frequently cited cities in scholarly attempts to understand the nature of Mexican/Maya interaction during this period. *Talud-tablero* is often mentioned in previous studies; but, there has been little investigation of when, where and why *talud-tablero* appears within the built environment and what it may tell us about the nature of intercultural interaction and political change at the beginning of the Early Classic period. The following section begins this process with a summary that interprets

possible meanings behind the appearance of *talud-tablero* in the early architectural development of Tikal, Uaxactun, Rio Azul and Copan.

Tikal

Tikal, Guatemala is one of the most heavily investigated cities in the investigation of Mexican/Maya interaction. Scholars have been drawn to Tikal for its long written history and extensive material record both of which contain a relatively large amount of formal, stylistic and symbolic references to Central Mexico. As one of the largest Maya cities, Tikal also has an extremely long and complex architectural history that includes a comparatively large proportion of *talud-tablero* features found in several contexts. All of Tikal's architecture, regardless of style, was placed on the natural landscape according to patterns established in the Preclassic that reinforced the sanctity of space and the ruler's relationship to it. The vast majority of monumental architecture at Tikal was constructed and finished in the conventional or "Classic" Peten style with apron-molded terraces surrounding a stucco-coated substructure topped by corbel-vaulted superstructures. However, Tikal's rulers and architects also embraced innovation and often incorporated foreign architectural forms on the façades of a variety of structures. The result is a built environment that retained long-standing Preclassic conventions of construction, form, layout and function, yet at times exhibited eclectic and visually complex exteriors.

North Acropolis

Tikal's largest architectural complexes, the Mundo Perdido and the North Acropolis, "experienced a parallel architectural evolution, each with a distinctive function and ceremonial focus" at least during their earliest manifestations (Laporte and Fialko 1990:64). The two complexes differ greatly, however, in their stylistic development particularly after 250 AD when structures in the Mundo Perdido began to display a large amount of *talud-tablero* features. In contrast, the architectural style of the North Acropolis changed little over the duration of the Classic period. Architectural change occurred only in superficial qualities such as scale, proportion and sculptural iconography while the structural core and overall style of the acropolis and its individual structures remained essentially the same. A few burials interred within the North Acropolis between 50 BC and 450 AD contained Mexican ceramic forms and iconography which are often cited as evidence of an association with Central Mexico. Curiously, there are no known examples of *talud-tablero* architecture in the North Acropolis. Although Mexican ceramic forms, decorative techniques and symbols appear in non-visible contexts, Maya rulers chose not to reference any Mexican artistic conventions on the exterior of the burial pyramid – the most public aspect of their memorial structure. Mexican forms and symbols only appear in the private contexts of tombs, possibly as an expression of personal connections with Mexican ancestry and/or religious beliefs. The choice to construct and finish the structures of the North Acropolis in the traditional Peten-style reflects the desire of successive kings to draw a visible spatial, stylistic, functional and symbolic association with the funerary

architecture of the earliest kings of Tikal and not with Central Mexico.

Mundo Perdido

Talud-tablero appears in two primary contexts at Tikal: the Mundo Perdido and Group 6C-XVI complexes located to the south of the North Acropolis. Individual features appear as early as 250 BC on structures from both complexes suggesting that Maya architects had a long history of knowledge of Mexican architectural conventions (Laporte and Fialko 1990:46). The inclusion of *talud-tablero* elements appears to have begun several centuries before the events surrounding the Mexican *entrada* of 378 AD. This stands as significant proof that the appearance of *talud-tablero* features was not a direct result of the historical events of 378 AD or the imposition of culture on Tikal by Mexican conquerors. However, there was a marked rise in construction and remodeling of structures finished with *talud-tablero* elements in the time frame surrounding the *entrada*, particularly between 300 and 450 AD. In the context of Tikal's early dynastic history, *talud-tablero* may have been used as early as the time of the founder in the first century AD with an increase in the use of the style during the fourth and fifth century reigns of Chak Tok Ich'aak I and his successor/replacement, Yax Nuun Ahiin I (Laporte 1987; Laporte and Fialko 1990, 1995). As at other Maya cities, the style fell into disuse during the Middle Classic hiatus and experienced a mild resurgence during the Late Classic in association with buildings that reinforced historic and spiritual ties to the founder (Cash n.d).

Elements of the *talud-tablero* style appear on multiple versions of several structures in the Mundo Perdido complex. The earliest version of the central pyramid of the Mundo Perdido (5C-54-1), built sometime between 500 and 250 BC, may have displayed a single Mexican architectural element on its façade (Laporte and Fialko 1990:46). However, it would be several centuries before *talud-tablero* features would appear with any regularity or prominence on the structures of the Mundo Perdido. After 100 AD there was a noticeable change in the visual character of the Mundo Perdido that included an increased appearance of the *talud-tablero* style. The fifth version of 5C-54 (5C-54-5), built around 250 AD, was the first structure in nearly five hundred years to be finished with *talud-tablero* features.[131] *Talud-tablero* features were also incorporated into the substructures of the East Platform around this same time creating a unified appearance for the ancient architecture of the Mundo Perdido. The remodeling of 5C-54 and the East Platform coincided with the construction of a new temple/pyramid (5C-49) that exhibited the greatest amount of *talud-tablero* forms to date. All of these structures incorporate varying amounts and combinations of *talud-tablero* features; however, they always appear in conjunction with key elements of conventional Lowland architectural style such as apron-molded terraces and stucco sculpture. The co-existence of *talud-tablero* and traditional architectural features strongly suggests that, although the two styles may have carried different associations, they functioned together as a part of an architectural program that provided meaning to the structures.

[131] It is important to note that such a large time gap is not necessarily the result of a lack of construction of structures with *talud-tablero* features. It could also be a product of archaeological sampling, the destruction of earlier structures, and/or incorrect dating.

Laporte and his colleagues have suggested that the increased appearance of *talud-tablero* architecture was the result of a shift in the function of the Mundo Perdido between 250 and 400 AD. The Mundo Perdido has a long history as a center of elite activity at Tikal. The Mundo Perdido is considered the principal location for public performance that confirmed the divine connection between the ruler and the supernatural forces of the cosmos during the Preclassic. By 250 AD, the Mundo Perdido began to include formal elite burials that may represent a shift in the function of the complex. The addition of burials occurs around the same time as a halt in construction in the North Acropolis between 250 and 400 AD, suggesting that the Mundo Perdido temporarily served as a significant elite burial ground.[132]

Group 6C-XVI

Group 6C-XVI is a small residential/ceremonial complex located to the south of both the Mundo Perdido and the North Acropolis and the second locus of *talud-tablero* architecture within Tikal's built environment. The group has a long construction history and like the Mundo Perdido experienced a surge in construction during the mid-fourth century. Most of the structures built and remodeled during this period displayed *talud-tablero* features in a variety of combinations (Laporte and Fialko 1990; Laporte 1992). Like the structures of the Mundo Perdido, *talud-tablero* elements did not appear in

[132] As discussed in Chapter 3, there is no strong evidence that the Mundo Perdido was the site of royal burials during this period. Future excavations may uncover a royal tomb; however, it appears as if the North Acropolis retained its status as the dynastic necropolis despite any gaps in construction.

isolation or in their pure Teotihuacán form but often in combination with Peten-style architectural elements and sculptural decoration. Like the Mundo Perdido, Group 6C-XVI gained a more Mexican appearance after 250 AD that may have coincided with a shift in function. Group 6C-XVI became the site for several elite burials often accompanied by secondary sacrificial offerings. Group 6C-XVI was also home to the Marcador, a monument that draws formal, iconographic and textual connections between Teotihuacán and the takeover of Tikal, and murals that depict the ballgame.[133] Overall, the increased appearance of *talud-tablero* architecture in Group 6C-XVI occurred as the group seemingly gained importance as a location associated with warfare, sacrifice and the ballgame, particularly as they relate to the political events of the fourth century.

Talud-Tablero at Tikal

Juan Pedro Laporte and his colleagues have proposed that fluctuations and innovation in the architectural development of Tikal, particularly an increased appearance of *talud-tablero* features, represents a political struggle between two or more local lineage groups (Laporte and Fialko 1990). He argues that one of these lineages adopted formal and iconographic elements from a foreign tradition and incorporated them into existing architectural groups to establish and reinforce their

[133] In Chapter 3, I suggest that the ballgame imagery of Group 6C-XVI may have had historical significance as a depiction of the events surrounding the capture and killing of Chak T'ok Ich'aak I, a ritual sacrifice that would have allowed for a legitimate transfer of power to Yax Nuun Ahiin I (see footnote #63).

power over the other lineage. Laporte's model equates architectural style with familial identity by claiming *talud-tablero* served as an emblem of sorts that marked certain buildings as belonging to a particular lineage group. However, Laporte focuses on instances of difference in the architectural record without reconciling them with the persistence of tradition in the same record. For example, Laporte claims that the structures of the Mundo Perdido and Group 6C-XVI marked with *talud-tablero* elements belonged to the lineage in competition with Chak Tok Ich'aak I (Laporte and Fialko 1990). While this may in fact be true, he does not address the fact that the figurehead of this lineage, Yax Nuun Ahiin I, eventually buried himself within the confines of the North Acropolis in a Peten-style pyramid that evokes a connection with previous rulers of the supposed "rival" lineage. It is significant that there are no known royal burials within the Mundo Perdido, Group 6C-XVI or any structure finished with *talud-tablero* elements at Tikal. Therefore, it is important to consider the symbolic and experiential context of buildings with *talud-tablero* features in relation to their overall style.

To elaborate on Laporte's conclusions, the sporadic incorporation of *talud-tablero* elements during the Preclassic period is in line with Tikal's cosmopolitan artistic history that included the presence of imported objects and experimentation with foreign forms, techniques, and symbols from throughout Mesoamerica. Laporte is correct to point out that *talud-tablero* was originally "implemented as a feature of eclecticism" and a style that was a "cultural trait widely diffused throughout Mesoamerica during the Late Preclassic receiving greater or lesser acceptance where it

came to be used and undergoing modifications through contact with architectural styles prevalent in each place" (Laporte and Fialko 1990:46). I also agree with Laporte's assertion that the appropriation of elements of the *talud-tablero* architectural style eventually became part of a strategy of representation that drew a distinction between competing lineages. As discussed later in this chapter, I argue that this distinction was limited to certain aspects of rulership, particularly those surrounding origin mythology, sacrifice and warrior prowess, which allowed a new lineage to justify and successfully seize power from the existing ruling family. The strong persistence of architectural tradition, especially in the North Acropolis, shows an equally important interest on the part of the new dynasty in retaining visual and symbolic continuity with its royal predecessors especially those descended from the city's founder, Yax Ehb' Xook. Therefore, because competing factions and/or different dynasties used both traditional Peten architecture and *talud-tablero,* neither architectural style can be tied exclusively to a particular lineage. However, I believe there is a clear relationship between the composition and meaning of the two styles and the nature of spaces they occupy.

At Tikal, *talud-tablero* appears on structures originally intended to replicate significant cosmic locations associated with primordial origins and rebirth, such as the sacred center and the underworld. During the Preclassic, the principal structures of the Mundo Perdido, Structure 5C-54 and the East Platform, functioned in part as an Astronomical Commemoration Complex or E Group. Façade iconography from the earliest levels of construction of the central pyramid (5C-54) displays large masks

representing the key cosmic bodies that mark the building as an *axis mundi*, or sacred center. As a point of access to the supernatural forces of the cosmos, performance within the space of this structure proved the ruler's special connections with the divine and reinforced his political legitimacy. By 250 AD, *talud-tablero* architectural features were added to the façade of 5C-54-5 without replacing the earlier masks (Laporte 1995). As in the North Acropolis, the core of the structure and its sculptural program were preserved despite superficial changes to the façade. There is no evidence of a shift in the function of 5C-54 or the Mundo Perdido complex at the time of the initial addition of *talud-tablero* elements. Therefore, the incorporation of *talud-tablero* features cannot be tied to a change in ritual behavior or its supporting belief system. In this case, the addition of *talud-tablero* features could only fulfill an intention to mark the building in a way that visually evoked the sacred landscape of Teotihuacán while preserving its original meaning. If you read the façade as a complete visual program, the combination of *talud-tablero* and conventional Lowland style architecture and Maya iconography clearly mark the building as a multifaceted space.

I suggest that the *talud-tablero* style of structures in the Mundo Perdido and Group 6C-XVI evokes a visual connection with the built environment and by extension the natural landscape of Central Mexico and Teotihuacán. The *talud-tablero* style may have signified a spatial and symbolic connection between the built environment of Tikal and the spiritual and/or political power located in the sacred spaces of Teotihuacán. David Stuart has effectively argued that Teotihuacán had a significant historic and

metaphoric role in the political and cultural changes of the Early Classic, especially at Tikal. Teotihuacán has a long history in Mesoamerican mythology as an early *Tollan*, an ancient place of origins and source of political authority (Carrasco 1982; Schele and Mathews 1998; Schele and Guernsey Kappleman 2000; Stuart 2000, 2004). The incorporation of *talud-tablero* elements into Tikal's architecture partially replicated the structures of Teotihuacán that represented the sacred spaces located in the natural landscape of the surrounding valley (Kubler 1973; Heyden 1975,1981; Taube 1986). At Tikal, the pairing of *talud-tablero* and Peten architectural styles visually and symbolically combined the ancient sacred spaces of Teotihuacán and Tikal, thereby merging the power of a distant and more ancient place of spiritual and political origins with local primordial places represented by Preclassic Maya architecture. By extension, the combination of stylistic features placed the ruler in a space experienced as the center of two highly charged loci of ancient spiritual and political power. I agree with Laporte that *talud-tablero* architecture was part of a strategy of representation used by the intrusive dynasty of Yax Nuun Ahiin I. However, I believe that the power of the style was not in its inherent identification as an emblem of a particular lineage but as a means of manipulating the memory and experience of real or imagined spaces. On a theoretical level, the eclectic style of the Mundo Perdido and Group 6C-XVI allowed for a multifaceted experience of places that legitimized the changing structure of political power.

A similar phenomenon occurs in Western architectural history, particularly at moments of political change that do not necessarily coincide with a complete break with

tradition. For example, American Federal architecture combines elements of the Early Colonial and Classical styles [Figs. 100,101]. The local materials and visual simplicity of the Early Colonial elements allows for the experience of a Federal structure as a distinctly American space. However, the inclusion of Classical elements retains a visual and symbolic connection with the long history of European civic architecture that informs the viewer that this is also a space for the performance of democracy. *Talud-tablero* architecture was powerful because when combined with the traditional Lowland style it created a physical and metaphoric connection with Maya and Mexican cosmic centers and primordial locations. The selective appropriation of the *talud-tablero* style allowed the intrusive ruler to display his control over the power embodied in both local and distant landscapes. On the one hand, such a performance would have connected the ruler to the foreign city of Teotihuacán in a way that distinguished him from previous rulers. However, these same rulers were careful to retain the stylistic and symbolic features of Lowland architectural tradition that connected them to the past and the local dynasty. On the whole, the appropriation of the *talud-tablero* style was part of an effective visual strategy that lent symbolic support and legitimization to the successful seizure of power by a new dynasty of "outsiders" in the fourth century.

Patterns in the types of structures and façade iconography of *talud-tablero* architecture at Tikal suggest that the style was intended to evoke a connection with very specific aspects of the symbolic power embodied by the built environment of Teotihuacán. When decorated, architectural murals and sculpture of the Mundo Perdido

and Group 6C-XVI continued to depict elite activity in relation to cosmic symbolism established during the Preclassic despite the incorporation of *talud-tablero* elements. The integration of Mexican architectural forms and Maya symbols offers further clues about the meaning of *talud-tablero* in the context of the built environment. For example, on several structures in Group 6C-XVI, the raised square *talud* form served as a frame for sculpture and paintings depicting Maya subject matter and symbolism rendered in traditional Maya style. The majority of *talud-tablero* structures in this group are decorated with scenes associated with the ballgame and/or warrior activity (Laporte 1987,1992). The "framing" of these scenes may have visually and metaphorically placed the activities depicted within the boundaries of the sacred space of the complex. The presentation of ballgame imagery within the frame of the *talud* may have acted in a similar manner to the quatrefoil, a framing device that located activity within the Maya underworld. The *talud* frame might have signified that the activity took place in a primordial place or underworld located in the distant Mexican landscape or its local incarnation in 6C-XVI or the Mundo Perdido. In both groups, *talud-tablero* architectural forms are always paired with ballgame, warrior and/or cosmic imagery. All of these contexts emphasize the ruler's control or "victory" over the forces of nature and death. In other words, *talud-tablero* features only appear on structures used to display the ruler's position as the embodiment of the sacred center and/or his status as a successful warrior. Patterns in the location, function and symbolism of structures finished with *talud-tablero* suggest that the style was adopted for its metaphorical connection with the sacred landscape of Teotihuacán as a place of origins and a source

of supernatural power(s), particularly those associated with warrior prowess.[134] This desired association did not replace existing standards of representation or Preclassic architectural and symbolic conventions. Instead, *talud-tablero* forms and their symbolic meaning acted in conjunction with traditional forms and symbols in a way that projected a new, more powerful image of the ruler without diminishing well-established and complementary aspects of his political power.

Uaxactun

The city of Uaxactun, Guatemala was an independent polity and rival power to nearby Tikal during the Preclassic period. However, Uaxactun fell under the political control of its neighbor in the late fourth century and remained subordinate for the duration of its history (Valdes and Fahsen 1992; Martin and Grube 2000). Archaeological and art historical investigations at Uaxactun have revealed several examples of Mexican ceramic forms, iconography and hieroglyphic references frequently cited as evidence of Mexican influence at both Tikal and Uaxactun. At Uaxactun, the majority of Mexican forms and symbols occur in the private context of burials. There are no known examples of Mexican forms or iconography associated with the public medium of architecture and only a couple of symbolic references on

[134] Several scholars have investigated the connection between Maya rulers and Mexican warrior culture. These studies have primarily focused on the presence of Mexican symbols, particularly the Feathered War Serpent, within Maya iconography and hieroglyphs (Schele and Freidel 1990; Taube 2000).

monumental sculpture.[135] The limited public expression of Mexicanness at Uaxactun is different in form and means of expression to what occurred at Tikal. As stated above, there are no known examples of *talud-tablero* architecture at Uaxactun. I contend that the absence of *talud-tablero* is proof of the selective nature of appropriation, the specificity in determining the context of *talud-tablero,* and the direct relationship between architectural style and the symbolic and experiential meaning of particular spaces.

Like Tikal, the built environment of Uaxactun is dominated by structures constructed, arranged and finished according to Lowland technical, stylistic and symbolic conventions. Over time, particularly after 378 AD, Uaxactun's built environment displayed an increased similarity in form, style, orientation and function with certain architectural complexes at Tikal. There are particularly strong parallels between the royal necropolis at both sites –Structure A-V and the North Acropolis. The presence of comparable architecture at both sites has been used as evidence of Tikal's political control over Uaxactun through a shared ruling lineage (Valdes, Fahsen and Escobedo 1999). Like Laporte at Tikal, investigators at Uaxactun have viewed patterns in architectural style as emblems of specific lineage groups. Once again, continuity in

[135] As presented in Chapter 3, two of Uaxactun's stela (4 and 5) display figures adorned with elements of Mexican warrior costumes and paraphernalia. As at other sites, Mexican iconography is presented in a Maya figural style and in the context of traditional royal portraiture. As such, the Mexican costume has significance as a representation of a particular aspect of rulership, warrior prowess, that gained importance in the fourth century probably in part through Tikal's political/military association with Teotihuacán.

the architectural record is overlooked in relation to moments of difference with innovation tied to a change in the identity of the individuals in charge of construction. However, the lack of *talud-tablero* architecture at Uaxactun makes this theoretical approach highly problematic. If *talud-tablero* functioned as the "official style" or emblem of the lineage of Yax Nuun Ahiin of Tikal, then it should also appear in the built environment of Uaxactun after the political takeover by this same dynasty; yet, it does not. The built environment of Uaxactun does, however, take on a greater similarity with Tikal by the end of the fourth century perhaps linked to a change in the power structure that politically linked the two polities. Uaxactun experienced a period of growth in construction and remodeling during a period of political struggle that resulted in the seizure of power by an intrusive dynasty. It is unclear whether the ruler eventually installed on the throne was from Tikal or a member of a local rival lineage aligned with Tikal. Either way, Uaxactun lost its status as an independent polity and became the political subordinate of Yax Nuun Ahiin I of Tikal. Dynastic change manifested itself in the built environment of Uaxactun through a re-centering of the city that included the construction of a royal necropolis. Structure A-V is virtually identical to the North Acropolis in structural style, orientation, and function suggesting that the rulers of Tikal and Uaxactun desired an observable connection between ancestral spaces of the two cities.

The late fourth century was a period of political change at Tikal that enhanced the local and regional power of the city, in part due to an affiliation with Teotihuacán.

As discussed earlier, *talud-tablero* architecture played an important role in the local visualization of spaces within the landscape of Teotihuacán that represented the origins of dynastic power and in essence made Tikal a new Tollan. The rulers of Uaxactun had direct political connections to the recently empowered dynasty at Tikal; yet, the rulers of Uaxactun made no effort to replicate the landscape of Central Mexico or areas of Tikal that display *talud-tablero* architecture. As stated above, the political takeover by Tikal had a strong effect on Uaxactun's built environment. As a new dynasty took power, it became significant to bury successive rulers within a single architectural complex that drew a visual and symbolic connection with the ruling dynasty of Tikal. Structure A-V replicates Tikal's ancestral mountain within the civic core of its subordinate, Uaxactun, literally superimposing a major source of Tikal's supernatural power on the local sacred landscape. As at Tikal, architectural form and style was used to draw a visual, symbolic and experiential connection with a distant and more powerful city. In this instance, however, the desired association is not with Teotihuacán but with its neighbor and overlord, Tikal.

Rio Azul

Of the four sites investigated, the early architectural, historical and cultural development of Rio Azul is the least understood. The site is the smallest and also the least investigated, partially because excessive looting has forever robbed the site of valuable material evidence and contextual information (Graham 1986a; Adams 1999). A relative lack of supporting data has made it difficult for scholars to establish a clear

pattern of the city's growth and architectural development over time.[136] Like Tikal and Uaxactun, Rio Azul appears to have existed as an independent polity operating within a broader regional culture during the Preclassic period (Adams 1999). There is no evidence of an E Group or Astronomical Commemoration Complex at Rio Azul. However, the presence of monumental structures such as Structure G-103 suggest that the city participated in the aspects of Preclassic culture that supported the political power of individual rulers in the same manner as Tikal and Uaxactun (Valdez 1995; Adams 1999). The city grew in size and power between 250 and 550 AD possibly in relationship to the changing political landscape of the Early Classic (Adams 1995; Robichaux 1990). Adams has proposed that the growth of Rio Azul is the direct result of a political takeover by Tikal in the late fourth century (Adams 1995,1999). While this remains a possibility, the exact nature of Rio Azul's connection with other Lowland sites, particularly Tikal, remains unclear.[137]

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[136] One of the goals of the Rio Azul project was to determine whether or not formal and relational differences in architecture also meant a functional distinction between individual structures and larger complexes (Adams 1999:7). The project's guiding interest in overall civic functionality meant a limited exploration of the architectural features of individual structures. Excavations focused on construction sequence primarily as a means of dating the material contents of architecture. In order to determine the function of individual and groups of structures, the project documented and compared the objects contained in caches, burials, and residential rooms within them. There is little comparison of the construction sequences of different complexes and no discussion of architectural form or stylistic development over time. As such, it is difficult to determine which individual structures and/or architectural complexes may have held particular importance within the ritual and historical life of the city.

[137] Unfortunately, there are few remaining hieroglyphic and iconographic sources from Rio Azul. Adams has relied primarily on the text of Stela 1 and the iconography of the Tomb 1 murals to draw a political connection between Rio Azul and Tikal. However, both his textual and iconographic interpretations are highly problematic. Stela 1 is

Rio Azul's Preclassic monumental and residential structures were leveled during the fourth century and replaced by a raised acropolis (Black 1987; Adams 1995; Valdes 2000). Construction on the acropolis was similar in architectural form, style and orientation to other Early Classic cities including Tikal, Uaxactun and Copan. The acropolis platform supported multiple architectural complexes with diverse structures such as palaces, a ballcourt and temple/pyramids, including a royal necropolis known as Structure A-3. Structure A-3 is of particular importance as it was the largest and most frequently remodeled structure and a highly significant sacred and ceremonial space within the city. The earliest versions of Structure A-3 date to approximately 250 AD, but archaeological evidence suggests it did not serve as an official mortuary shrine until the late fourth century around the same time as the principal Preclassic burial site (G-103) fell into disuse (Orrego Corzo 2000; Valdez 2000). The redesign of structures associated with Preclassic sacred spaces to incorporate high-level burials occurred not only at Rio Azul but also at Tikal and Uaxactun. Like Tikal and Uaxactun, there is no evidence of *talud-tablero* features within the royal necropolis of Rio Azul. The form and style of structures within the A-3 complex is comparable to burial pyramids at Tikal and Uaxactun and included a single roomed superstructure with roof comb atop an apron-molded terraced platform decorated with large stucco masks flanking the central

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poorly understood and the structure and meaning of the text is still under investigation by epigraphers (Simon Martin, David Stuart, personal communication 2005). At best, one could only say that Stela 1 very loosely suggests that Tikal may have held some role in the rise to power of a new dynasty at Rio Azul around the turn of the fifth century. On the whole, Adams' suggestions require further investigation.

stairway (Adams and Gatling 1986). The architecture and sculptural iconography of Structure A-3 followed the Lowland tradition of marking the necropolis as the cosmic mountain occupied by the ancestors. Over time, the structure grew with the incorporation of a series of royal burials and developed an even greater visual and symbolic similarity with the North Acropolis at Tikal and Structure A-V at Uaxactun.

Archaeological investigations at Rio Azul have uncovered a number of Mexican ceramic forms, iconographic symbols and one possible example of *talud-tablero* architecture. Scholars have used this material evidence to draw connections between the Rio Azul and the Mexican city of Teotihuacán. However, the majority of information provided by the archaeological, textual and visual information strongly supports the idea that any appearance of Mexican forms and symbols at Rio Azul was the product of a desired association or possible political affiliation with Tikal, not any direct contact with Teotihuacán. As at Uaxactun, Mexican forms appear primarily (if not completely) in the private context of burials and not in more public contexts such as architecture and sculptural iconography. The vast majority of monumental architecture at Rio Azul is typically Peten in style with terraced apron-molded substructures, modeled stucco façades and corbel vaulted superstructures (Adams 1990:29). There is only a single structure with questionable *talud-tablero* architectural features; but more importantly there are no monumental structures that carry the *talud-tablero* style at Rio Azul.[138] All

[138] The one potential example of *talud-tablero* features was found on a small platform in the courtyard of Structure B-56. The location of this platform within a specialized residential group that would eventually accommodate high-ranking burials has strong

structures, even those with *talud-tablero* elements, are consistent with Early and Late Classic Peten architectural standards in terms of construction materials, plans, elevations, relative arrangement, and masonry technique (Adams and Gatling 1986:205). Overall, the built environment of Rio Azul conforms to the conventions of the Maya Lowlands with particular similarity to the architectural configuration and style of Tikal's North Acropolis. The lack of *talud-tablero* architecture within the built environment shows that there was no interest in recreating the landscape of Teotihuacán or its symbolic counterpart *Tollan* at Rio Azul.

There is little evidence to suggest that Rio Azul radically departed from the artistic conventions or belief system that supported the institution of kingship as it existed in the Preclassic. However, the reordering of the site and increased construction of monumental architecture suggest some degree of socio-political change at Rio Azul during the Early Classic (Adams 1999:139). Adams argues societal change was a direct result of increasing militarism, the institution of a new political order based on divine kingship and the development of regional states (Adams 1999:150-161,170-171).[139] In

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similarities in form, placement and context to Group 6C-XVI at Tikal. It is uncertain whether or not the B-56 complex had a similar connection with the ballgame and the concept of warrior prowess; however, the inclusion of burials within the complex strongly suggests that the space represented a point of access to the underworld comparable to that associated with the game.

[139] Throughout his work, Adams consistently attempts to define Rio Azul as an administrative center with a significant role within a regional state controlled by Tikal. Based on Joyce Marcus' model of regional states, Adams views Rio Azul as a secondary site established by Tikal for political control over the northeastern Peten The regional state model depends on the hierarchal ranking of sites (primary, secondary, tertiary, etc.) based on size, function and architectural diversity (Marcus 1973,1976).

particular, Adams sees hieroglyphic texts and artistic innovation as evidence of the incorporation of Rio Azul into a regional state centered at Tikal during the Early Classic (Adams 1999:113-116). Under his model, any relationship with Central Mexico was most likely indirect and filtered through Tikal who may have benefited from a more direct relationship or political connection with Teotihuacán (Adams 1990:38; Adams 1995: 47).[140] Adams had to find archaeological evidence of administrative activity in order to support his theory that Rio Azul functioned as a secondary site under the control of Tikal, an approach that relies heavily on architectural functionalism. Adams never considers the nature of architectural style and its relationship to the experience of space. As at Uaxactun, the built environment of Rio Azul became more centralized and

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Interaction between sites was primarily administrative with secondary sites controlling the distribution of locally produced goods throughout the regional state. This model has since been replaced by an understanding of Maya politics as a system of overkingship (Martin and Grube 1994,1995,2000). Under this model, subordinate sites pledged or surrendered allegiance to their overlord, but cities retained a degree of autonomy.

[140] Many of the interpretations presented by the Rio Azul Project attempt to place Rio Azul within what is believed to be a changing political climate and social structure that distinguished the Preclassic from the Early Classic. The "arrival of strangers" associated with Central Mexico at Tikal served as the impetus for political and cultural changes that swept the Lowlands during the fourth century. However, like other scholars, Adams privileged the information provided by the historical record. Visual culture was viewed as a secondary source where "artistic depictions usually supplement hieroglyphic texts at Rio Azul rather than the other way around" (Adams 1990:33). Unfortunately the texts of Rio Azul are few and far between and poorly preserved thereby providing only minimal information about the city's history. The possible mention of Siyaj K'ak' in an unknown context on Stela 1 creates a suggestive connection between Rio Azul and Tikal during the late fourth century. Adams proposed that the drastic changes to the architectural layout of the city, the Mexican ceramic forms interred in Tombs 19 and 23, imagery of captives on sculpture and the textual mention of Siyaj K'ak' are evidence of a conquest of Rio Azul by Tikal c. 385 AD (Adams 1995:41). All of Adams conclusions are based on the reading of Stela 1 that remains for the most part undeciphered.

standardized in form, style and function after the fourth century. The built environment was redesigned in a way that closely resembled the principal sacred spaces of Tikal, especially the North Acropolis. At the very least, similarities in the style, orientation and function of monumental architecture suggest that the rulers of Rio Azul desired a visible connection with the built environment of Tikal. However, it is difficult to use architecture to interpret the nature of the relationship between Tikal and Rio Azul without any historical confirmation of who constructed these buildings and why they were built.

The situation at Rio Azul raises the question of whether the architectural style of Tikal's North Acropolis and Mundo Perdido set the standards for funerary architecture at certain Lowland sites during the Early Classic. The rare appearance of *talud-tablero* architecture may suggest that the style was restricted to Tikal and cities like Copan that were politically dominant in their region due in part to a genealogical connection to the dynasty at Tikal. Rulers of secondary sites such as Uaxactun and Rio Azul, whether subordinate to Tikal or not, may not have been allowed to build in the *talud-tablero* style because of its strong associations with primordial locations manifested in the sacred landscape of Tikal. If Rio Azul was subordinate to Tikal, the style of the A-3 complex would have drawn an association with the ancestral mountain of Tikal that reinforced the dominance of Tikal over the city of Rio Azul. If Adams is incorrect, the rulers of Rio Azul may have used architectural style to evoke a metaphoric connection with the ancestral power of Tikal. In either case, the nature of style is such that it is

possible to draw a symbolic association with locations at Tikal without any direct political connection between the two cities.

Copan

Architectural and material evidence suggests that Preclassic Copan was a highly developed city experiencing a certain degree of internal political competition well into the fifth century (Fash and Fash 2000:448). The arrival and accession of K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo' in or around 426 AD was a decisive event in Copan's history that resulted in the unification of multiple lineage groups through the establishment of a new political order (Stuart 2004).[141] The new dynasty changed the course of the city's political

[141] Until recently, the nature of this pivotal event in Copan's history has been poorly understood because there are no surviving texts or images dating to the time of the founder. Our understanding of this period is based on a limited reconstruction of events as recorded in later, retrospective texts. Altar Q, commissioned by Copan's 16th ruler, Yax Pasaj, in the late 8th century remains the most important source of information about Yax K'uk' Mo' and the foundation of the Copan dynasty. The text of Altar Q records the accession events of a lord known as K'uk' Mo' Ajaw (believed to be the pre-accession name of K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo') (Stuart 2004:233). The first event involved the "taking of the k'awiil", an action associated with accession but with greater significance involving a "pronounced political change, where a ruler receives new divine symbols or sacred charters associated with rulership" (Stuart 2004:233). The text then records the so-called arrival event just three days later. Both of these events occur at a specific location known as the *wií-te-naah* or "tree root house" (also called the "crossed bundles house"), a name with strong associations with Central Mexico, the Mexican war serpent, and Tikal's founder Nuun Yax Ahiin I (Stuart 2000; 2004:235-237). In the context of Yax K'uk' Mo's accession, Stuart translates the name of this location as the "origin house", the seat of dynastic foundation and the place where Yax K'uk' Mo received his royal charter from the gods (Stuart 2004:238). The third phrase of the text recording the end of the journey of Yax K'uk' Mo' and his arrival at Copan about five months after his departure from the origin house. The exact location of the origin house remains unknown, but its symbolic associations with Central Mexico suggest a location at Teotihuacán or more likely, Tikal (Stuart

fortunes for the remainder of the Classic period. The architectural and hieroglyphic records show that the civic/ceremonial core of Copan experienced significant architectural changes and rapid growth during the Early Classic probably initiated by the historical events of 426 AD. It is generally accepted that the initial construction of the Acropolis and the Great Plaza coincided with the reigns of the dynastic founder, Yax K'uk' Mo' and his son, Popol Hol (Sharer, Fash, et al.1999; Sharer, Traxler, et al. 1999; Traxler 2004:58-59,63). Although earlier monumental architecture remains undiscovered, it is clear that the development of the Acropolis in the late fifth century was an effort to re-center the city as a means of legitimizing the political claims of the new dynasty (Traxler 2001,2003:57,2004). The reordering and formalization of the civic core of Copan may have represented a rebirth of the city in the visual and symbolic context of *Tollan*, a sacred place of origins with strong associations with Central Mexico, and as I have argued, Tikal (Fash and Fash 2000:449; Sharer 2003a:156).

Copan is the only other city studied besides Tikal to have a significant amount

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2004:239). The end result of the events of the late fourth century was a political takeover of Copan by Yax K'uk' Mo' that resulted in the establishment of a new dynastic order. There is no direct evidence that the takeover involved military force, but later portraits of Yax K'uk' Mo' depict him with elements of a Mexican warrior costume (Coggins 1988). Scholars have long equated Yax K'uk' Mo' s Mexican costume and associated Mexican ceramic forms, architecture and iconography as evidence of his Mexican ethnicity and origins. However, archaeological, iconographic, stylistic and epigraphic data all suggest that K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo' did not come from Teotihuacán but was a powerful Maya king probably from the Peten region with indirect associations with Central Mexico (Sharer 2003a:145-146, 2004:300-301).

of *talud-tablero* features within its early built environment. The principal location of *talud-tablero* features in on the platform base of Hunal, the structural and symbolic centerpiece of the Acropolis and the presumed burial location of the city's founder, Yax K'uk' Mo' (Bell, et al. 1999; Sharer, Fash, et al. 1999; Sharer, Traxler, et al. 1999; Fash and Fash 2000; Martin and Grube 2000; Stuart 2004). A secondary context is the single *tablero* on the front façade of the lower terrace of the third incarnation of Structure 10L-26 (known as Papagayo) built by Ku Ix (a.k.a. Ruler 4) in the mid-fifth century (Fash 1998; Fash, Fash, et al. 2004). Centuries of remodeling and expansion attest to the fact that Structures 10L-16 and 10L-26 marked two of the most significant sacred spaces in the city. Both structures represented a different symbolic center that provided points of access to the supernatural realm that reinforced the political power of Copan's rulers. From their inception, Structures 10L-16 and 10L-26 functioned as dynastic shrines that actively connected successive rulers to their ancestors through public performance and visual representation. The visual expression of access to ancestral power, particularly in the person the founder, was one aspect of rulership that appears to have been of critical importance for the rulers of Copan.

Like Tikal, *talud-tablero* stylistic elements were incorporated on structures that represented a sacred center of the city and a point of access to supernatural power that reinforced a ruler's power. If Taube is correct in his reconstruction of Hunal as a radial pyramid, Hunal would have closely resembled Structure 5C-54 in the Mundo Perdido at Tikal and E-VII-sub at Uaxactun. In all cases, a radial structure was used to mark a

principal sacred center or *axis mundi*. This structural form was found in the context of an ancient ACC or E Group at Tikal and Uaxactun. At Copan, however, this structure included a royal burial that sanctified the space within the Acropolis and provided points of access to the supernatural power of generations past. This is particularly important in considering the relationship between style and the experience of the space of Structure 10L-16. Because this structure contained the tombs of the founder and his wife, it embodied the origins of the dynasty and remained a touchstone for later rulers to venerate and call upon the ancestral source of the city's rise to power (Bell, Canuto, et al. 2004:156). The symbolic power of the founder was so great that subsequent versions of 10L-16 built by Copan's second ruler and his successors were consistently labeled with the name of the founder, Yax K'uk' Mo', evidence that he was enshrined as a god and honored long after his death (Houston and Stuart 1996; Traxler 2003). The use of the radial pyramid form and *talud-tablero* substructure on Hunal may have been an attempt to visually evoke an association with 5C-54 in the Mundo Perdido at Tikal. Architectural, textual and iconographic evidence confirm that Structure 10L-16 marked a space associated with dynastic origins and the person of the founder throughout its history. I argue that the hybrid architectural style of Hunal represents its intended experience as the sacred center of the city and the primordial place of origins for the dynasty of Yax K'uk' Mo'.[142] The use of the radial form was rare in Early Classic

[142] Hunal appears to have been surrounded by a water feature that may have identified the structure as a primordial mountain of creation and its surrounding sea – possible further evidence that the structure was considered a sacred center and a place of origins (Sedat and Lopez 1999).

construction and may have been a conscious archaism used to give the illusion that Hunal marked an ancient space similar to the Mundo Perdido or Group E. The style may have provided a degree of legitimacy and/or sanctity to a mythical and ancestral location that was in fact a brand new construction.[143] In any case, I contend that the use of the *talud-tablero* style was intended to evoke symbolic and experiential association between the sacred spaces newly established by the intrusive dynasty of Copan and the sacred landscape of Tikal, not Teotihuacán.

Similar to contexts at Tikal and Copan, *talud-tablero* features were only one part of a complex architectural and decorative program most of which was traditionally Maya in form, style and symbolism. The sculptural programs found on the associated structures offer a clue to the potential meaning of the *talud-tablero* features, particularly as markers of specific sacred spaces associated with mythological and historical origins. Most significant is the decoration of the façade of Papagayo that included stucco masks and skybands that mark the structure as a cosmic location (Baudez 1983, Fash 1998; Fash, Fash, et al. 2004). The incorporation of *tableros* into the sculptural program closely resembles the changes made to the fifth version of Structure 5C-54 in the Mundo Perdido at Tikal. At both sites, individual *tableros* were integrated into a

[143] Later texts do recall events and participants that predate the arrival of Yax K'uk' Mo' and may have occurred in the distant mythological past (Stuart 2004). The construction of Hunal may have provided a location for these events within the built environment of Copan. A small text from a shell found in the Hunal tomb may offer clues to the exact nature of this space. Read by David Stuart as "*(u)y-uh wiíte*" (his necklace, tree root) this text may be connected to *Wiíte-naah*, (Tree Root House) a ritual location found in later texts in connection with the founder (Stuart 2004:232).

traditional sculptural program dominated by cosmic symbolism on a structure that represented a sacred center or *axis mundi*. Structure 10L-26 is slightly more complex in its symbolism than Structure 10L-16 as it functioned not only as the ancestral mountain for the entire dynasty but also had close ties to the ballgame – the sacred sport that ensured the transfer of power between generations and political rivals. From the beginning, Structure 10L-26 and the ballcourt were structurally and symbolically intertwined in a way that provided a spatial and visible link between victory in the ballgame, the succession of kings, the expansion of power, and the consequent survival of the dynasty. The use of *talud-tablero* features in spaces associated with the ballgame is markedly similar to its application in Group 6C-XVI at Tikal. It is unclear whether or not the *tablero* served as a literal frame for images as they did at Tikal; however, the features marked the building as a cosmic location that served as the site of ballgame activities, the most symbolic expression of warrior prowess for Maya rulers.[144]

Patterns in composition and context strongly suggest that *talud-tablero* features embodied a cosmic location similar in concept but slightly different in meaning to those represented by traditional Maya architectural forms. The visual and textual record at Tikal shows that *talud-tablero* features were intended to evoke associations with the distant landscape of Central Mexico. Such associations reinforced the direct political connections between Tikal and Teotihuacán through ritual performance on structures embodied by local and foreign supernatural forces. However, I would argue that the use

[144] There may also be a formal connection between Mexican *talud-tablero* structures and the ballcourt (see pg. 160-161**)**

of *talud-tablero* stylistic qualities had a similar purpose within the built environment of Copan, but with slightly different connotations.

Recent investigation into the architectural and material remains of Copan's early history refutes earlier models of interaction that suggest a direct intrusion of Teotihuacanos or an indirect connection between Copan and Teotihuacán via Kaminaljuyu (Fash and Fash 2000:449). However, the presence of unusual burial types, Mexican ceramic forms, iconography, and *talud-tablero* architectural features "all point to a conscious and deliberate attempt by the first two rulers of Copan to associate themselves with the great metropolis of Central Mexico" (Fash 1998:232-233). This association was more than mere imitation and was most likely part of a political strategy that included the visual expression of connections to sources of political authority and military might. Ultimately the appropriation of Mexican stylistic qualities was intended to alter collective memory of the origins of power and expand the authority of the new dynasty (Webster, et al 2000:24; Fash and Fash 2000:456; Sharer 2003a:163). The strategy of representation that validated Copan's dynastic foundation in part through the appropriation of Mexican forms and symbols is curiously similar to visual strategies that supported the re-foundation of Tikal in 378 AD (Sharer 2004:302). The connections between Tikal and Copan are reinforced by architectural and material evidence uncovered by the Tikal Project, El Proyecto Nacional de Tikal and ECAP excavations. Firstly, osteological analysis of the skeletons found in Hunal, the upper chamber of Margarita, and Motmot revealed that principal elite burials contained the

remains of individuals that were not native to Copan but associated with the Peten region (Buikstra 2004:211-212). Secondly, epigraphic and iconographic evidence at Copan infers a strong connection between the founder Yax K'uk' Mo' and the Central Peten – most likely with the ruling dynasty of Tikal (Grube et al. 1985; Martin and Grube 2000:32-33;Stuart 2000:491,493,503-504).[145] Finally, the selective use of *talud-tablero* features occurs in similar compositions and contexts at Tikal and Copan and always in conjunction with architectural forms and sculptural iconography with roots in the Preclassic Lowlands. Furthermore, *talud-tablero* elements appear on the same types of structures associated with the same types of spaces, most notably those that mark sacred centers and places of symbolic rebirth. In addition, the symbolism of architectural sculpture that in part included *talud-tablero* features "probably reflect[s] traditional themes of royal presentation and claims of ancestral connections rather than any kind of interaction between Copan and Central Mexico" (Webster, et al 2000:191). Therefore, when looked at in context, the presence of what many have interpreted as Mexican-style structures and objects are really closer in form, style and context to art and architecture produced at Tikal fifty years earlier rather than art and architecture created at Teotihuacán. Therefore, it is my conclusion that the early dynastic rulers of Copan appropriated elements of the *talud-tablero* style to evoke visual, symbolic, and by extension political associations between the sacred centers of Copan and Tikal, not Teotihuacán. Any association with Central Mexico was experienced indirectly as a

[145] Stuart believes that there was a strong relationship between Tikal and Copan during the Early Classic but cautions against the assumption of a direct connection as there are no clear mentions of Yax K'uk' Mo' in the inscriptions of Tikal (Stuart 2004:247).

product of connections between Teotihuacán and Tikal that by the fifth century had become part of the origin mythology of Copan's new dynasty. In terms of architecture, this connection included formal and symbolic references within the built environment of Copan to the structures at Tikal that embodied primordial spaces that marked Tikal as the *Tollan*, or divine source of political authority.

Evaluating the Meaning of the *Talud-Tablero* Style in the Early Maya Built Environment

The architectural record clearly shows that local and foreign architectural elements, including *talud-tablero*, co-existed within the built environment in various combinations and amounts since the Preclassic period. There are no known examples of structures built entirely in a "pure" Mexican style that perfectly replicates the architecture of Teotihuacán from the inside out. Instead, when *talud-tablero* elements appear in the Maya landscape they are found on the exterior of structures built using local materials that follow well-established Maya conventions of construction and design. In other words, the structural core of every building analyzed is essentially Maya. Furthermore, all structures investigated were finished with exterior features and modeled stucco sculpture grounded firmly in Preclassic Maya traditions despite any inclusion of *talud-tablero* stylistic elements. When considered as complete objects, architecture previously viewed as Mexican in style was in reality very Maya in its conception, construction, and composition. The rare appearance of *talud-tablero* features occurs only as a single visual element in a multifaceted visual program that is

dominated by Maya architectural and sculptural forms.

The analysis of the early architectural development of Tikal, Uaxactun, Rio Azul and Copan shows that architectural style is a valuable record of artistic choice that reveals much about the intended perception and function of individual structures and the built environment as a whole. The coexistence of traditional and innovative architectural forms clearly shows that the incorporation of Mexican architectural stylistic elements was an active choice on the part of Maya rulers and not the product of foreign architects or external control over artistic production. Their choices were selective and included enough elements to create perceptible associations with Central Mexico without detracting from a visible connection with Maya tradition. The selective appropriation of the *talud-tablero* style at Tikal and Copan both modified existing landscapes and initiated new sacred spaces. Although it is believed that architects at Tikal had a long history of knowledge and use of *talud-tablero* features, construction that included Mexican elements increased rapidly in conjunction with the rise of a new dynastic order in the late fourth century. It is unknown whether the Preclassic built environment of Copan included any *talud-tablero* elements; however, it appears as if the style was first incorporated into the city's architecture by the founder, Yax K'uk' Mo' and his son, Popol Hol, in the fifth century. In any case, it is certain that the use of *talud-tablero* features significantly increased around the time of political upheaval and dynastic change at both Tikal and Copan. The question remains, however, what meaning did architectural style and in particular the *talud-tablero* style have within the

context of the Maya built environment as a whole? Furthermore, what role did the use of *talud-tablero* have in the assumption and maintenance of political power of those rulers in the Maya Lowlands who desired a visible association with Central Mexico?

First and foremost, I argue that that the use of *talud-tablero* features represented an artistic choice that purposefully altered both the visual character and symbolic meaning of the built environment in two major ways. Firstly, I propose that the incorporation of *talud-tablero* stylistic features into the built environment allowed rulers to manipulate aspects of collective memory (particularly conceptions of real and imagined spaces related to origin mythology and warfare) in a way that connected them with the sacred landscape of powerful Mexican cities, especially Teotihuacán. The adoption of specific Mexican architectural features (i.e. the *talud* and *tablero*) intentionally drew visible, symbolic and experiential connections with the supernatural forces dwelling in distant natural and man-made landscapes. Secondly, I argue that Maya rulers gained a level of disconnection with previous dynasties through the visualization of their access to powerful foreign sacred locations. Any disconnection was tempered by an interest in maintaining continuity with past rulers that was absolutely necessary in the seizure and maintenance of power. The absence of *talud-tablero* in the architectural records of cities like Rio Azul and Uaxactun confirms the selective nature of appropriation and shows that not all rulers desired or were able to draw a visible association with Central Mexico. What we see instead at these sites is an increased interest in shaping the built environment and conceptions of space to evoke

the sacred landscape of Tikal.

Patterns in the use of *talud-tablero* show that the style was intended to draw a visual and symbolic association between Tikal and Central Mexico (or Teotihuacán) with both sites representing a place of origin (or *Tollan*) and a source of power for the new political order. The intrusive dynasty of Copan also included *talud-tablero* features on their most sacred architecture built nearly a century later. Continued research has shown that Copan's rulers had strong ties to the ruling dynasty of Tikal and no direct connection to Teotihuacán. Furthermore, there is no evidence in the architectural record of early Copan that suggests a desire to replicate or directly evoke the architecture of Teotihuacán. Therefore, the *talud-tablero* style most likely carried a slightly different meaning at Copan than it did at Tikal. The overall style of the early Acropolis of Copan reflects local conventions of construction, design and layout. However, the early rulers of Copan chose to incorporate *talud-tablero* stylistic features onto the façades of the structures that marked the most highly charged spaces of the Acropolis with. Overall, there are demonstrable similarities in the composition and context of *talud-tablero* elements within the built environments of Copan and Tikal. This parallel strongly suggests that during the process of re-centering the city, the new dynasty of Copan sought to evoke a visual association with Tikal, not Teotihuacán. Since Tikal held some significant role in the political takeover of Copan, any architectural reference to the sacred spaces of Tikal would have drawn powerful visible and experiential connections with the supernatural power and/or political validation most likely responsible for the

new dynasty's rise to power. It is critical to understand, however, that the appropriation of *talud-tablero* features at both Tikal and Copan occurred in conjunction with a strong desire to preserve existing perceptions and representations of sacred space. On the whole, rulers of the new political order at both Tikal and Copan employed the *talud-tablero* style in a way that asserted their differences from previous rulers without destroying their connection with the social, political and cultural institutions that sustained Maya rulership and validated their claim to power.

Talud-Tablero and the Concept of Tollan in the Maya Built Environment

This study in part furthers theories presented by David Stuart to include the idea that Maya rulers were conscious of the power of the *talud-tablero* architectural style in the conservation and/or alteration of collective memory as it relates to Central Mexico and the concept of *Tollan* (Stuart 2000). It is extremely significant that *talud-tablero* features only appear in very specific contexts, most notably on structures associated with sacred centers and/or the underworld as a location for symbolic rebirth. Maya rulers appear to have valued foreign architectural styles for their metaphorical power, particularly their ability to evoke or replicate specific locations with strong symbolic associations that reinforced their political power. It is my contention that the incorporation of elements of Mexican architectural style was intended to draw a visual and symbolic connection between the sacred landscape of Teotihuacán and the built environment of select Maya cities. The greater question lies in why certain Maya rulers

were interested in modifying the spaces that reinforced their power to partially evoke the distant city of Teotihuacán.

The meaning of architectural style lies in the composition of forms and the perception and experience of the space associated with a structure. For Maya rulers the most significant spaces and structures were those that embodied the supernatural powers that provided religious, political and/or military capital. The placement of monumental structures was a calculated choice intended to integrate the built environment with strategically and ideologically important natural features and sacred locations that enhanced the power of the ruling class.[146] In the Western world, architecture is typically experienced as a container for meaningful space and the mass of the structure is not believed to possess any symbolic power. Maya architecture, on the other hand, was experienced as an extension of space where the forms of the structure embodied the power associated with the space they occupied. The power of place was visualized and experienced by the mass, height, degree of elaboration – and I propose style - of the building. More than this, monumental architecture provided a place for ritual performance that activated the associated space and made its power visible to the desired audience. On the whole, architecture had a considerable role in the construction and perpetuation of the political power of divine rulers. Architectural style provides a significant portion of the visual backdrop or spatial context for activity

[146] The relationship between architecture, sacred spaces and public performance has long been a topic of investigation for archaeologists, anthropologists and art historians. Refer to footnote #33 for a list of primary sources on this topic.

within a structure. Therefore, any interpretation of the meaning(s) of architectural style must consider patterns in composition as they make visible the concepts that inform the experience of a particular space.

This study has shown that *talud-tablero* features are extremely rare within the built environments of Lowland Maya cities. Of the four cities investigated, only two, Tikal and Copan, have structures finished with *talud-tablero* features.[147] All known examples of *talud-tablero* appear on structures associated with highly charged symbolic spaces, most notably those that embody a sacred center, primordial place of origin or place of rebirth. As stated earlier, monumental and residential architecture at all four sites, even those with *talud-tablero* features, consistently followed local and cultural conventions of construction, materials, layout and function. All of the structures investigated were essentially Maya in conception, construction and function with *talud-tablero* making up a small part of the exterior composition. It is particularly interesting that *talud-tablero* appears only on the substructures of buildings and always in conjunction with traditional Maya architectural features and iconography. This pattern of placement of *talud-tablero* on substructures strongly implies that the style was meant to give new meaning to the literal and symbolic foundation of the structure without

[147] Rio Azul may have a single example of *talud-tablero* on what appears to be a small platform; however, this identification remains problematic. If it is a *talud-tablero* platform, it appears in a specialized elite residential/ceremonial group, much like Structures Sub-48 and Sub-26 in Group 6C-XVI at Tikal. The placement of this platform in association with a high-ranking burial is similar to the application of *talud-tablero* on structures embodying important ancestors at Copan. If the Rio Azul platform displayed *talud-tablero* features it was in the same context of structures at Tikal and Copan that marked sacred locations associated with the underworld, origins and rebirth.

altering the perception and function of its "active" space. It is clear that Maya rulers were aware of the power of style to evoke new associations within the viewer without challenging the existing meaning or experience of a structure.

The selective application of both traditional and foreign stylistic features would have evoked associations with specific sacred spaces in both local and distant landscapes. I believe that Maya rulers recognized the power of architectural style to alter perceptions of space through the manipulation of collective memory, most notably the history and mythology surrounding Central Mexico and Teotihuacán. One of the most powerful perceptions of Teotihuacán was as a primordial place of origins and a source of political power or *Tollan* (Carrasco 1982; Schele and Mathews 1998; Schele and Guernsey Kappleman 2000; Stuart 2000,2004; Martin 2000). The natural and man-made mountains of Teotihuacán sit on a series of caves that represent a point of access to the underworld, and a place of creation and the home of powerful gods that sanctified the institution of rulership (Heyden 1976,1981; see also Taube 1986).[148] There is

[148] Although it is difficult to prove conclusively, the location of *talud-tablero* features on the platform base of structures may also reflect a symbolic association with the space of the earth and/or underworld. Kubler originally suggested that *talud-tablero* might have carried this meaning within the architecture of Teotihuacán (Kubler 1973). Although it is difficult to prove, Kubler's interpretation is based on the consistent pairing of *talud-tablero* structures and sculptural iconography depicting underworld features and occupants such as the feathered serpent, water, and jaguars. Linda Schele and Karl Taube have proposed that *talud-tablero* structures at Teotihuacán, particularly the central pyramid of the Ciudadela, may have been the location where rulers received the warrior headdress from the Mexican War God/Feathered Serpent **(**Freidel and Schele 1990**,** Taube 1992,2000**)**. The spatial context of this interpretation connects the institution of rulership and the practice of warfare and sacrifice with the Feathered Serpent god that emerges from a watery underworld location (Sugiyama

significant evidence that Teotihuacán represented a sacred center and a mythical place of origin for several cultures throughout Mesoamerica until the Spanish Conquest (Matos Moctezuma and Lopez Lujan 1993; Carrasco (ed.) 2000; Boone 2000). David Stuart has effectively argued that iconographic and textual references to Teotihuacán held a similar meaning in Maya culture (Stuart 2000). There is ample proof that the two regions had a long history of interaction with an increase in intensity and/or symbolic value after the fourth century AD.

The inclusion of *talud-tablero* onto some of the oldest and most sacred structures of Tikal visually and symbolically transformed certain spaces in a way that evoked aspects of the sacred landscape of Mexico. As such, the city of Teotihuacán became a physical part of the Maya built environment. The alteration of the built environment would have made visible a mythical place of origin or *Tollan* within the sacred heart of the city. The establishment of a site as a *Tollan* essentially involves the re-centering the world at the location "where rulership was sanctioned" (Guernsey Kappelman 2001:85). At Tikal, this re-centering occurred in the remodeling of the Mundo Perdido while at Copan it was manifested in the newly constructed Acropolis. The selective application of *talud-tablero* on the structures that marked recently established sacred centers of these cities is strong evidence that recently empowered

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1989.1992,2000). Curiously, *talud-tablero* appears in similar contexts in the Maya region particularly as a frame or platform for events that take place within the earth or underworld (such as the related activities of the ballgame, burial and rebirth) that sanctify a ruler's power and status as a victorious warrior.

dynasties valued the Mexican style for its strong association with the sacred landscape of Teotihuacán, believed to be the original *Tollan* and a powerful source of political authority.

The Role of Talud-Tablero in the Process of Dynastic Foundation

The data also suggests that the appropriation of Mexican architectural elements had a secondary symbolic meaning. I propose that *talud-tablero* was brought into the Maya architectural vernacular as part of a strategy of disconnection, a theory originally proposed by Andrea Stone to explain the use of Mexican iconography in Late Classic sculpture (Stone 1989). The installation of or political takeover by a new dynasty would have required a delicate balance of breaking the symbolic cycles that provided the political legitimization of existing rulers while providing continuity with the belief system and strategies of representation necessary to do so. Iconographic and textual evidence suggest that the political takeover at Tikal may have been achieved in part through the physical assistance of a Mexican army and/or the spiritual assistance of Mexican patron gods (Martin 2001a; Stuart 2000; Taube 2000). There is no evidence that Mexicans played any direct role in the dynastic overthrow of Copan. Instead, material evidence suggests that it was most likely Tikal that had a heavy hand in the exchange of power (Fash and Fash 2000; Sharer 2003a,b,2004; Stuart 2004). At Copan, iconographic references to Mexican gods and architectural associations with the sacred spaces they occupied appear to evoke the presence of these supernatural forces within

the built environment of Tikal, the apparent *Tollan* of the Lowlands.

Structures that displayed *talud-tablero* elements in conjunction with traditional forms carried a degree of visual and symbolic distinction from previous constructions. This was particularly true at Tikal where the new dynasty needed to assert its claims to power and overthrow the existing rulers. At Copan, *talud-tablero* architecture was only one part of the style of structures that more closely resembled the architecture of Tikal. In either case, the alteration of the visual character of the built environment and the meaning of its most sacred spaces would have clearly distinguished the new political order from the old. Paradoxically, this strategy of disconnection was closely related to a strategy of connection that allowed for innovation while maintaining the continuity necessary to support the ideological and performative institutions that sustained the existing power structure. But what role did *talud-tablero* architecture have in an intrusive dynasty's ability to assert their power?

Structures with *talud-tablero* architectural features often carry images of rulers and important ancestors in sacred locations, particularly their engagement in warfare and ballgame activities. All of these structures mark the sacred spaces associated with the key players and ritual activities responsible for the local succession of kings and the seizure of power at rival kingdoms. On the whole, the incorporation of *talud-tablero* elements into the built environment was part of a strategy of representation employed by intrusive dynasties to express what Simon Martin has called "a language of universal hegemony" (Martin 2001a). This strategy visually expressed the military might and

authority of the new political order of the Peten in part through the alteration of the built environment. The use of the *talud-tablero* style drew a symbolic association with the landscape of Teotihuacán, an aggressive militaristic power. Sculptural iconography and hieroglyphic texts show that rulers of the new order emphasized their status as successful warriors, many of which donned a Mexican warrior costume and paraphernalia. Rulers of the intrusive dynasty used architecture to publicly express their foreign origins and their access to powerful Mexican gods, particularly the Mexican War Serpent (Schele and Freidel 1990; Stone 1989; Taube 2000). Rulers accomplished this not through a direct replication of Teotihuacán in the Maya region, but through the selective incorporation of *talud-tablero* onto the sacred spaces in the built environment that reinforced their political power. On the whole, the visual and symbolic synthesis of Maya and Mexican architectural styles transformed the specific locations within the built environment into the experiential equivalent of places of origin and symbolic rebirth located in local and distant natural landscapes. Public performance in these spaces also made visible the ruler's connections to Mexican and Maya gods and participation in events such as the ballgame and sacrifice that reinforced his status as a victorious warrior. The space of these Mexican/Maya style structures represented both the historic place of sacrifice and the mythic place of origins and rebirth that enabled and legitimized the claim to power by the intrusive dynasties of Early Classic Tikal and Copan.

Conclusions

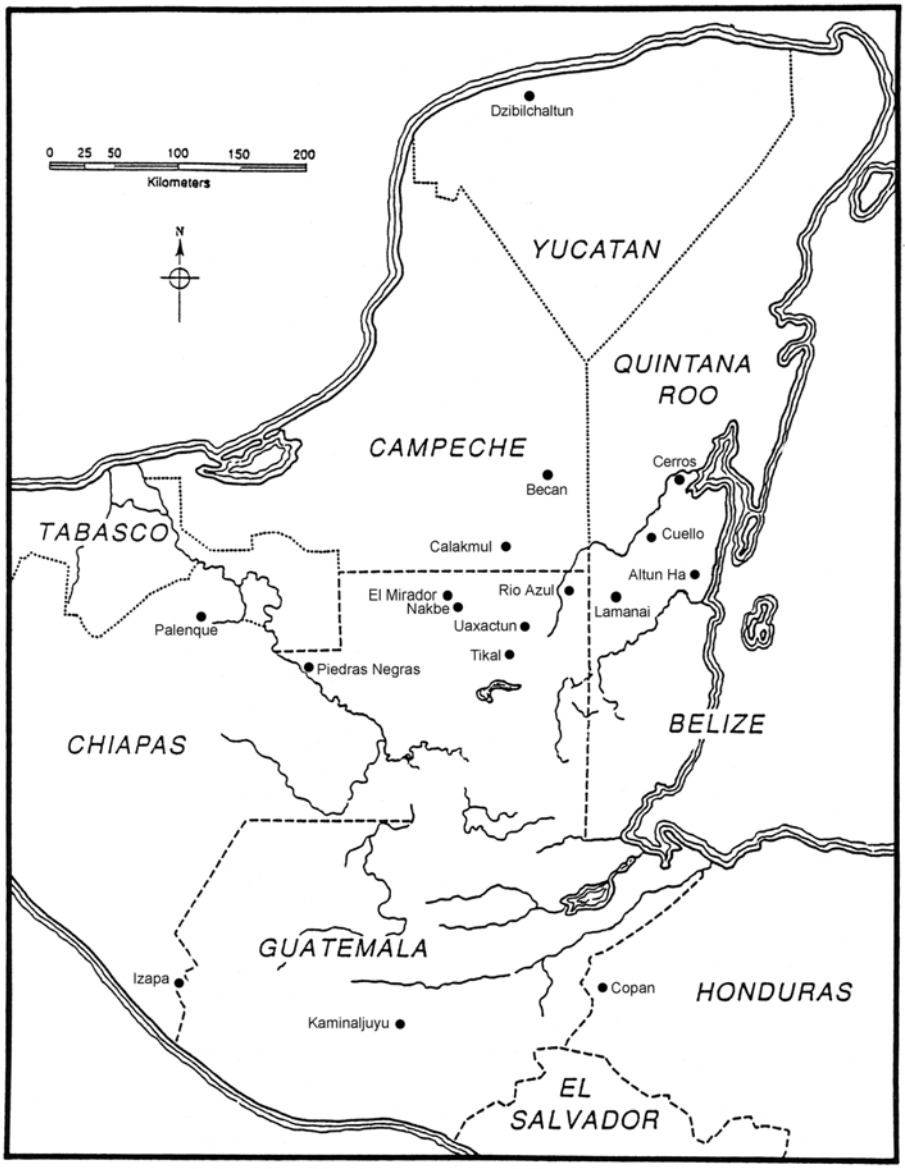
Regardless of its place of origin, it cannot be denied that *talud-tablero* carried strong associations with Central Mexico and the city of Teotihuacán. However, its use in the Maya built environment had less to do with Teotihuacán itself as a political entity or Central Mexican culture than it did with what this city and its landscape represented to Maya rulers. The city of Teotihuacán experienced great power and wealth supported by what is becoming increasingly understood as military might (Sugiyama 1989,1992,2002). I have argued that the presence of *talud-tablero* architecture in the Maya built environment was not the result of passive reception of imposed ideas or cultural "influence", but an active process of appropriation. It is my contention that politically savvy and ambitious Maya rulers co-opted the power associated with the city of Teotihuacán through the manipulation of local perceptions of space and the supernatural power embodied in the immediate built environment.

The adoption of the *talud-tablero* architectural style allowed dynastic founders and their immediate successors to associate themselves with the supernatural powers embodied in distant landscapes through the evocation of Mexican sacred spaces within the established sacred geography of Maya cities. I believe that the connection between Maya rulers and Mexican spiritual power, particularly Teotihuacán's status as a place of origin and the home of powerful gods of war, was valued because it effectively distinguished new dynasties from previous rulers and legitimized their claims to power. Publicly exhibited control over or cooperation with powerful foreign gods and possibly

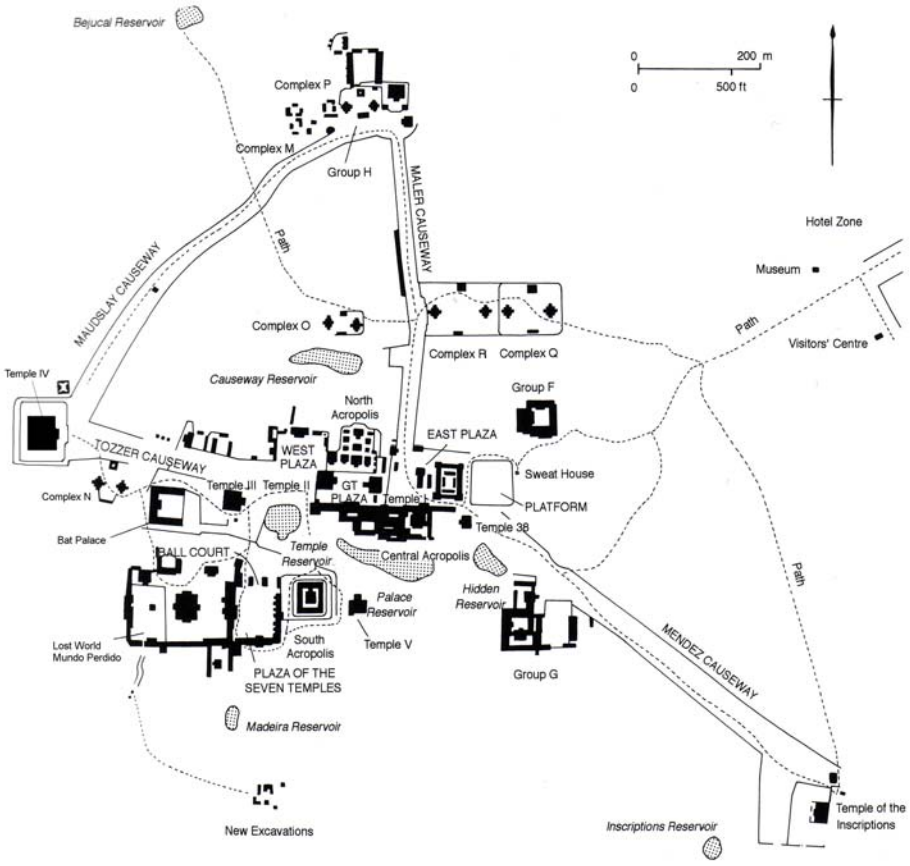
ancestors through established ritual activity within sacred locations allowed intrusive Maya dynasties to gain the political and religious justification that secured their acquisition of power without disassociating themselves from the established belief system and ritual practice that supported Maya rulership. During periods of dynastic foundation, re-foundation and civic expansion and/or reorientation, Maya rulers re-centered their world by establishing a new seat of power that spatially and symbolically connected them to the supernatural forces associated with both local and distant sacred spaces. Ultimately, *talud-tablero* elements coexisted with traditional Peten-style architecture in a way that marked certain spaces in the built environment as primordial locations that embodied a diverse and powerful pantheon of gods and deified ancestors whose power could be harnessed by dynasties that claimed descent from distant kings.

MAPS

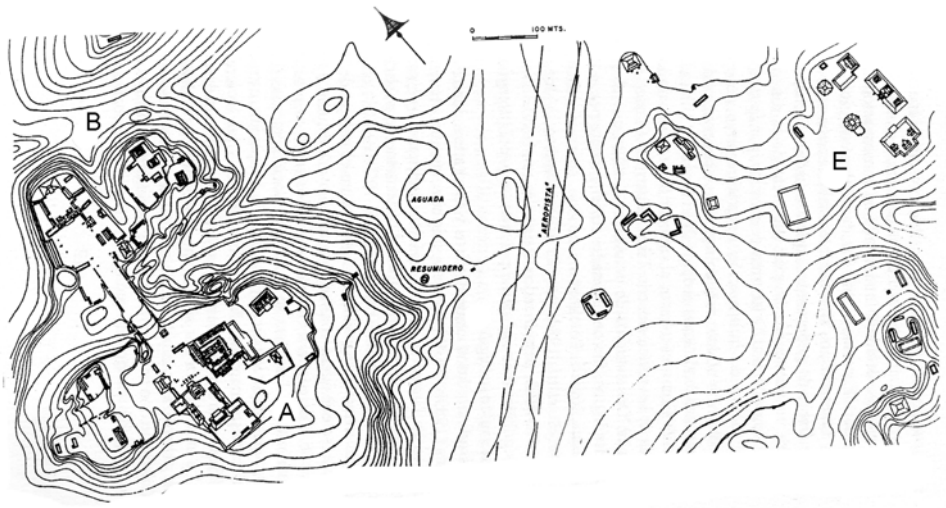
Map. 1 – Mesoamerica – Teotihuacán and Tikal



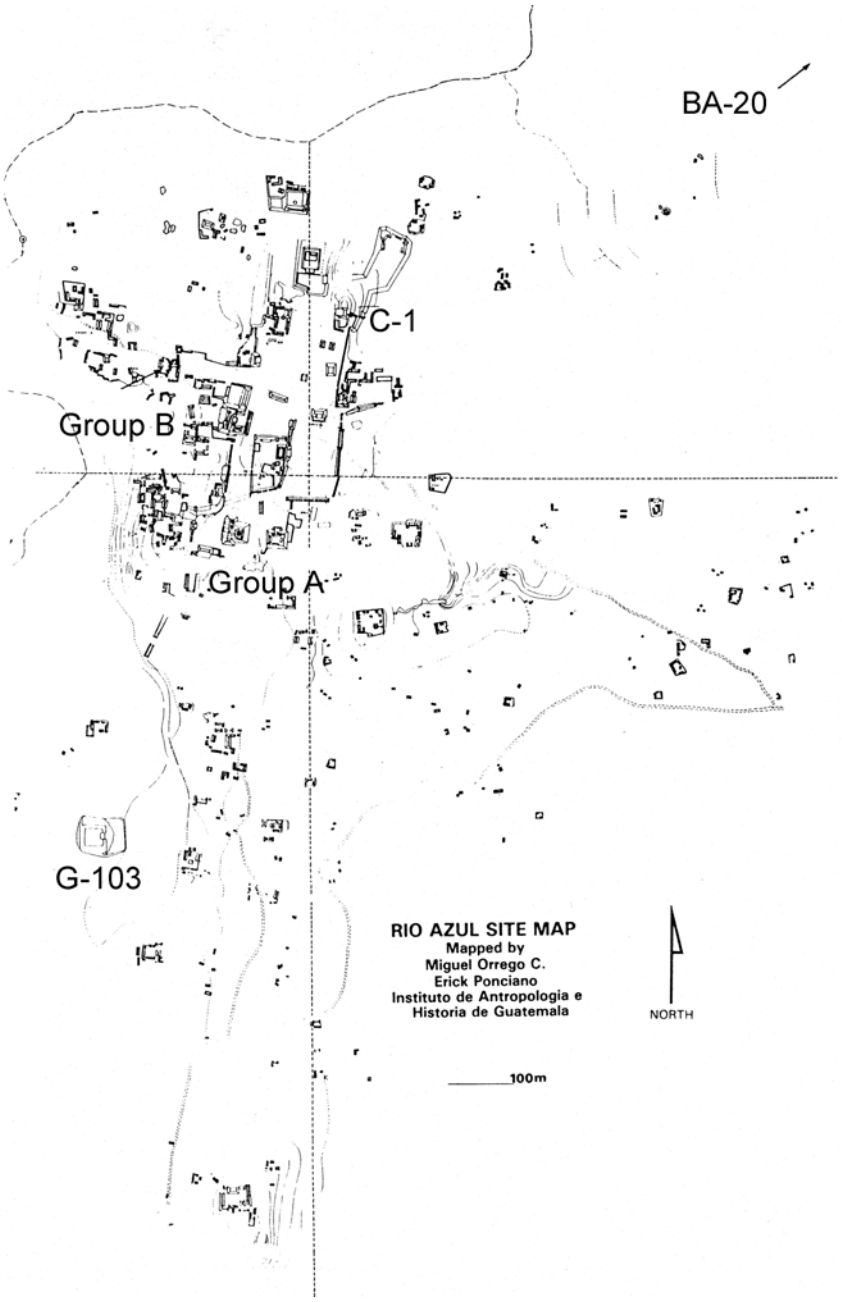
Map 2 – The Maya Region and Referenced Sites



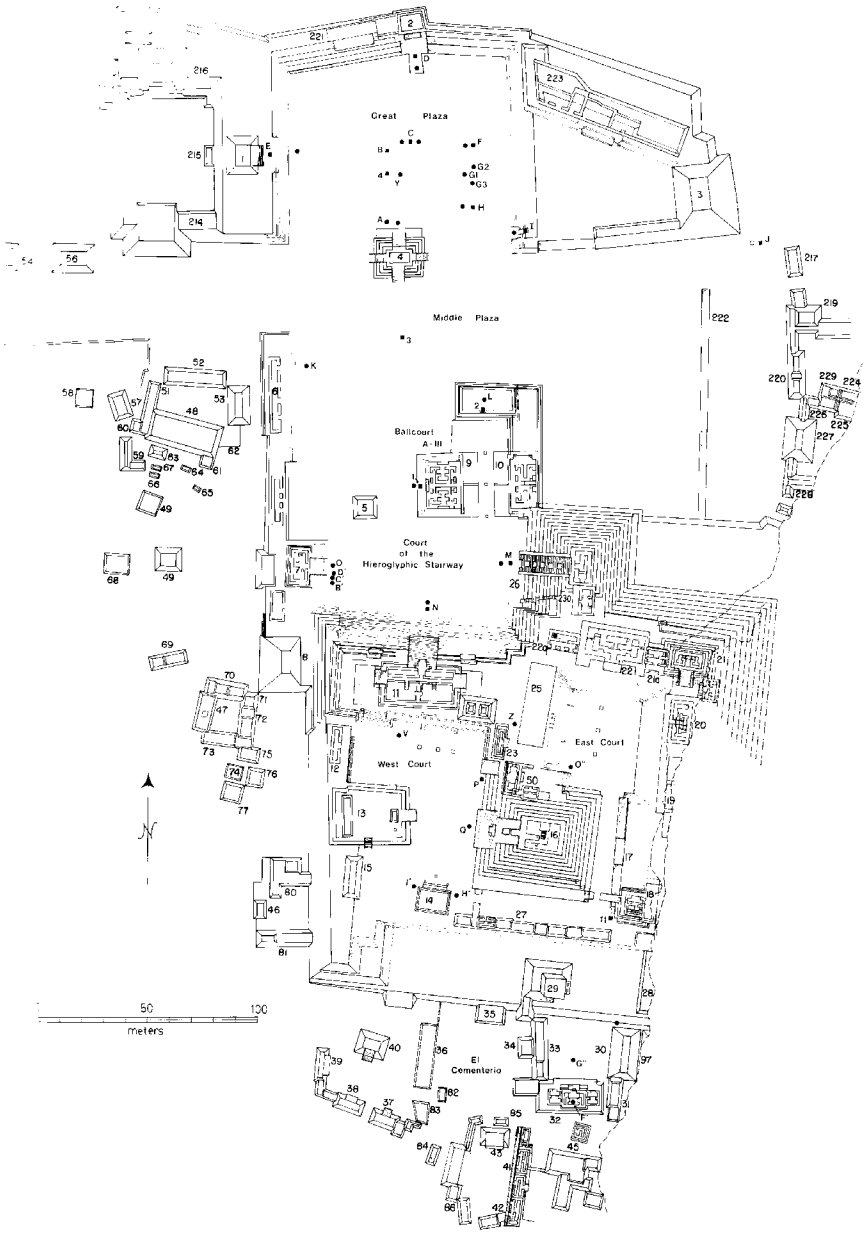
Map 3 – Site Map, Tikal, Guatemala
(Harrison 1999)



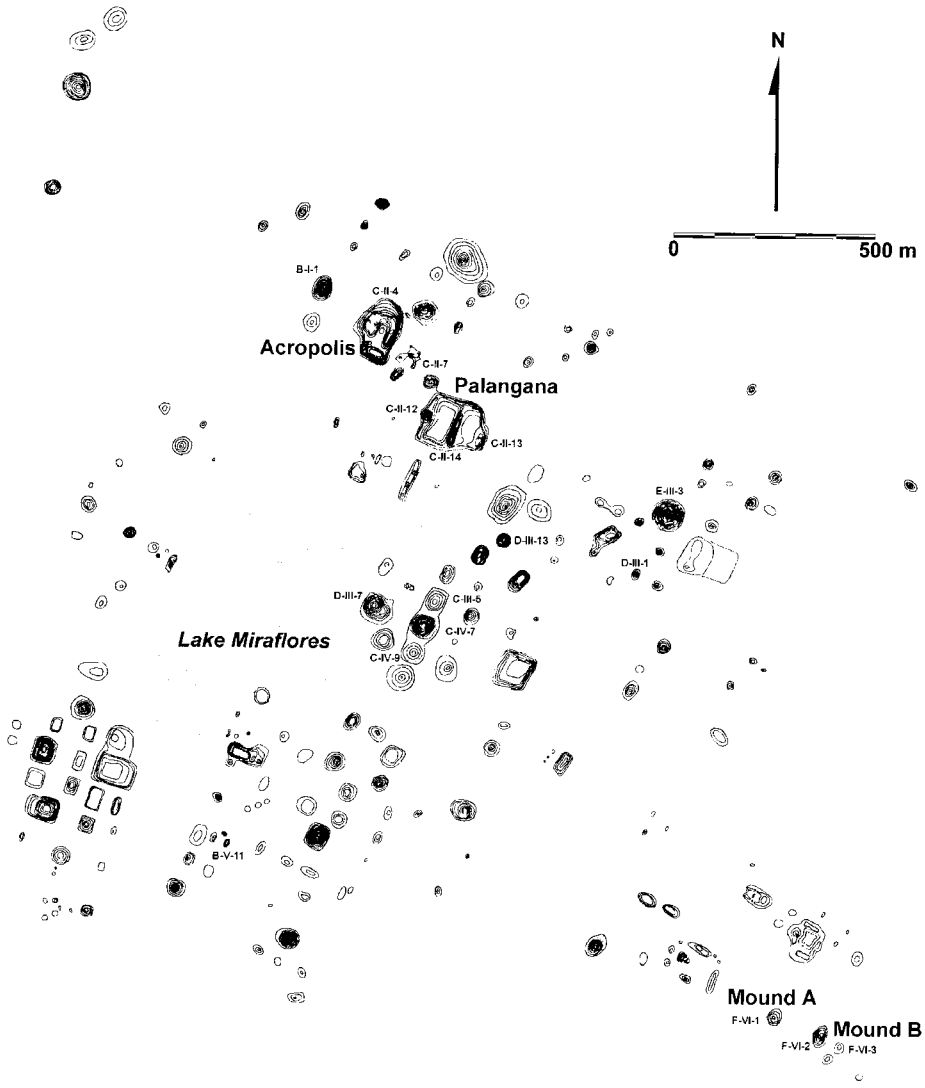
Map 4 – Site Map, Uaxactun, Guatemala
(Map by Ian Graham 1984)



Map 5 – Site Map, Rio Azul, Guatemala
(Map by Miguel Orrego C., Erick Ponciano, IDEAH)



Map 6 – Site Map, Copan, Honduras
(Fash 1994)



Map 7 – Site Map, Kaminaljuyu, Guatemala
(Sanders and Michels 1977)

TABLES

Ceramic Sequence of Kaminaljuyu
(Kidder, Jennings and Shook 1946,
revised by Borheygi 1965)

Dates	Period
1200-1500 AD	Chinautla
1000-1200 AD	Ayampuc
700-100 AD	Amatle/Pamplona
400-700 AD	Amatle/Esperanza
300-400 AD	Aurora
200-300 AD	Santa Clara
200 BC-200 AD	Miraflores/Arenal
500-200 BC	Majadas/Providencia
1000-500 BC	Las Charcas

Ceramic Sequence of Kaminaljuyu (Cheek 1977)

Dates	Period
1000-1500 AD	Chinautla
800-1000 AD	Amatle III
600-800 AD	Amatle II
400-600 AD	Amatle I/Esperanza
200-400 AD	Aurora
200 BC-200 AD	Verbena/Arenal
500-200 BC	Providencia
800-500 BC	Las Charcas
1000-800 BC	Arevalo

Table 1 – Ceramic Sequences/Chronologies, Kaminaljuyu, Guatemala

Tikal Ceramic Sequence (Culbert 2003)

Period	*Ceramic Complex*	*Approximate Date*
Postclassic	Caban	A.D. 950–1200(?)
Terminal Classic	Eznab	A.D. 850–950
Late Classic	Imix	A.D. 700–850
Intermediate Classic	Ik	A.D. 550–700
Early Classic	Manik	A.D. 200–550
Terminal Preclassic	Cimi	A.D. 150–200
Late Preclassic	Cauac	A.D. 1–150
Late Preclassic	Chuen	350 B.C.–A.D. 1
Middle Preclassic	Tzec	600–350 B.C.
Middle Preclassic	Eb	800–600 B.C.

Tikal Ceramic Sequence (Laporte and Fialko 1987,1995)

Complex	*Approximate Date*
Eb	800-600 BC
Tzec	600-350 BC
Chuen	350-200 BC
Cauac	200 BC–200 AD
Cimi	50 BC–250 AD
Manik 1	250-300 AD
Manik 2	300-400 AD
Manik 3a	400-500 AD
Manik 3b	500-600 AD
Ik	600-700 AD
Imix	700-800 AD
Eznab	800-950 AD
Caban	950-1200? AD

Table 2 – Ceramic Sequences/Chronologies, Tikal and Uaxactun, Guatemala

Name	Approximate Dates
Yax Ehb Xook (Founder)	c. 90 AD
Foliated Jaguar	?
Animal Headdress	?
Siyah Chan K'awiil I	c. 307 AD
Lady Une' Balam	>317 AD>
K'inich Muwaan Jol	?-359 AD
Chak Tok Ich'aak I	360-378 AD
Siyaj K'ak'*	
Spearthrower Owl**	374-439 AD
Yax Nuun Ayiin I	379-404? AD
Siyah Chan K'awiil II	411-456 AD
K'an Chitam	458-486? AD
Chak Tok Ich'aak II	486-508 AD
Lady of Tikal	511-527> AD
Kaloomte' B'alam	c. 511-527> AD
Bird Claw	?
Wak Chan K'awiil	537-562 AD
Animal Skull	>593-628> AD
Rulers 23,24	c.640 AD
Nuun Ujol Chaak	>657-679 AD
Jasaw Chan K'awiil I	682-734 AD
Yik'in Chan K'awiil	734-746> AD
Ruler 28	>766-768 AD
Yax Nuun Ayiin II	768-794> AD
Nuun Ujol K'inich	c. 800 AD
Dark Sun	>810> AD
Jewel K'awiil	>849> AD
Jasaw Chan K'awiil II	>869> AD

* not considered ruler of Tikal
** accession outside of Tikal, probably ruler of Teotihuacan (Stuart 2000)

Table 3 – Reign Summaries, Tikal Guatemala
(after Martin and Grube 2000)

Ceramic Sequence at Rio Azul, Guatemala

700-250 BC	Mamom
250 BC–250 AD	Chicanel
250-357 AD	Tzakol I
357–530 AD	Tzakol 2-3
530-650 AD	HIATUS
593-692 AD	Tepeu I
692-800 AD	Tepeu 2
800-830 AD	Tepeu 3

Table 4 - Ceramic Sequence/Chronology Rio Azul, Guatemala
(after Adams 1999)

Ceramic Sequence, Copan

Date	Period
900-1300 AD	Ejar
700-900 AD	Coner
400-700 AD	Acbi
150-400 AD	Bijac
400 BC-150 AD	Chabij
900-400 BC	Uir
900-600 BC	Gordon
1300-900 BC	Rayo

Table 5 – Ceramic Sequence/Chronology, Copan, Honduras
(after Fash 1994)

Name	Approximate Dates
Yax K'uk' Mo (Founder)	416 - c.437 AD
K'inich Popol Hol	c. 437> AD
Ruler 3	c. 455 AD
Ku Ix	c. 465 AD
Ruler 5	c. 475 AD
Ruler 6	c. 485 AD
Waterlily Jaguar	>504-524> AD
Ruler 8	>551 AD
Ruler 9	551-553 AD
Moon Jaguar	553-578 AD
Butz' Chan	578-628 AD
Smoke Imix	628-695 AD
Waxaklajuun Ub'aah K'awiil	695-738 AD
K'ak' Joplaj Chan K'awiil	739-749 AD
K'ak' Yipyaj Chan K'awiil	749-761> AD
Yax Pasaj Chan Yooat	763-810> AD
Ukit Took'	c. 822 AD

Table 6 – Reign Summary, Copan, Honduras
(after Martin and Grube 2000)

Teotihuacan Ceramic Sequence

Date	Period
700-750 AD	Xometla
650-700 AD	Oxtoticpac
600-650 AD	Metepec
500-600 AD	Late Xolalpan
400-500 AD	Early Xolalpan
300-400 AD	Late Tlamimilolpa
250-300 AD	Early Tlamimilolpa
200-250 AD	Miccaotli
100-200 AD	Tzacualli
150 BC–100 AD	Patlachique
100-150 BC	Tezoyuca
200-150 BC	Late Cuanalan

Table 7 – Chronology, Teotihuacán, Mexico
(after Cowgill 1996)

ILLUSTRATIONS

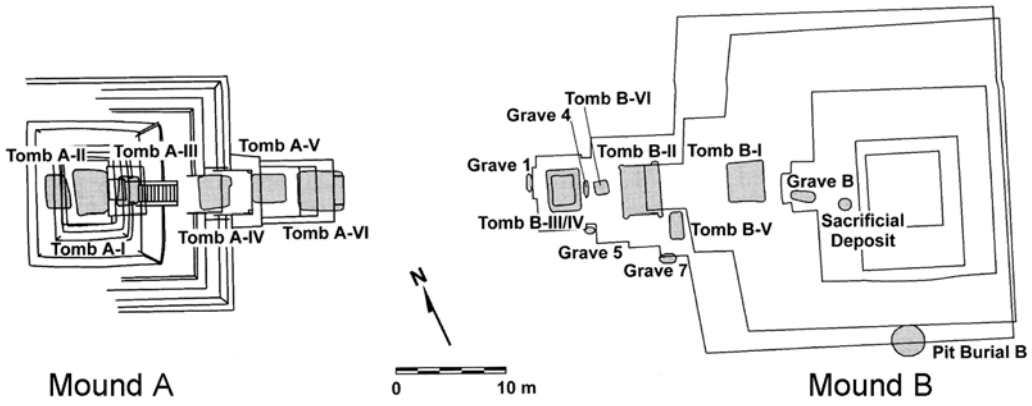


Figure 1. Plan, Mounds A and B, Kaminaljuyu, Guatemala (Kidder, Jennings and Shook 1946)

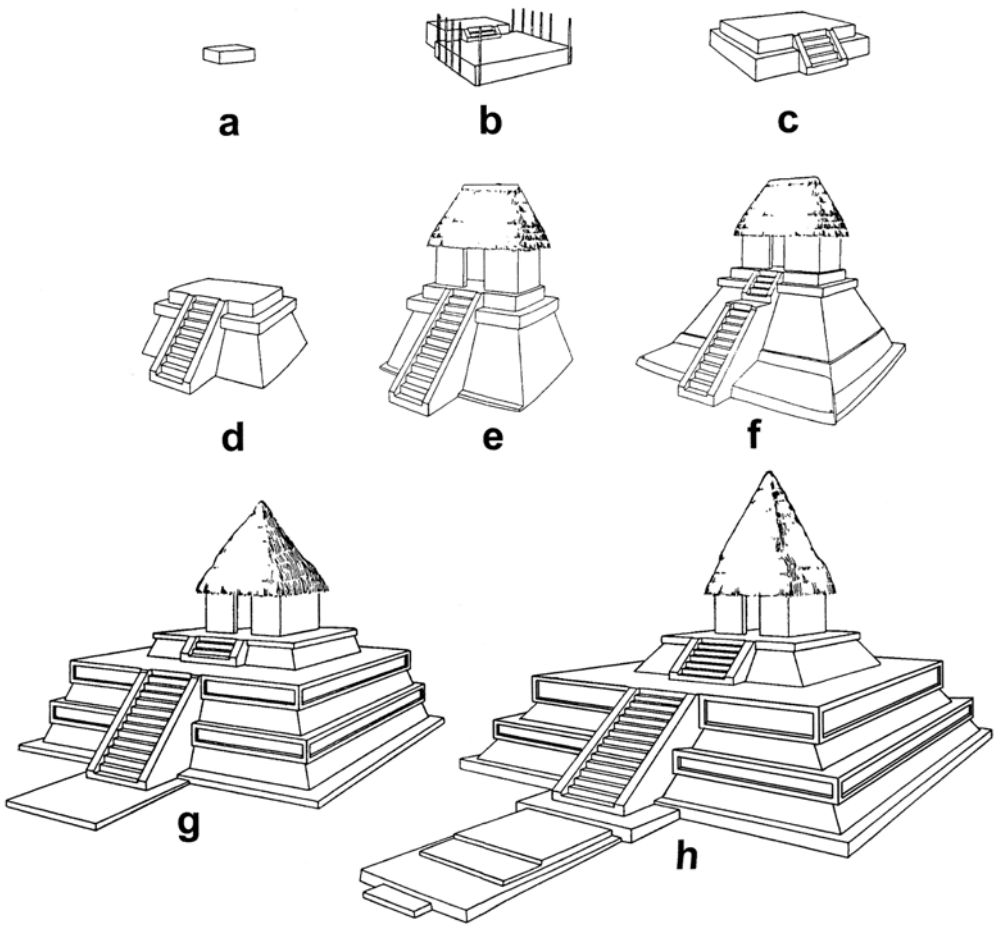
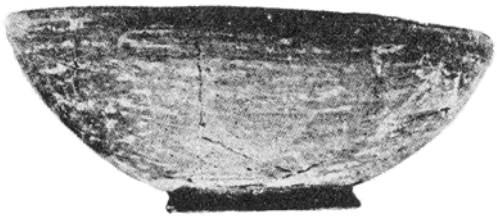


Figure 2. Construction Sequence of Mound A, Kaminaljuyu (Kidder, Jennings and Shook 1946)

a.



b.

c.

Figure 3. Mexican and Maya Ceramic Forms, Kaminaljuyu
a. Cylinder Tripod Vessel, Tomb A-I
b. Ring-stand Bowl, Tomb A-I
c. Basal-flange Bowl, Tomb A-VI

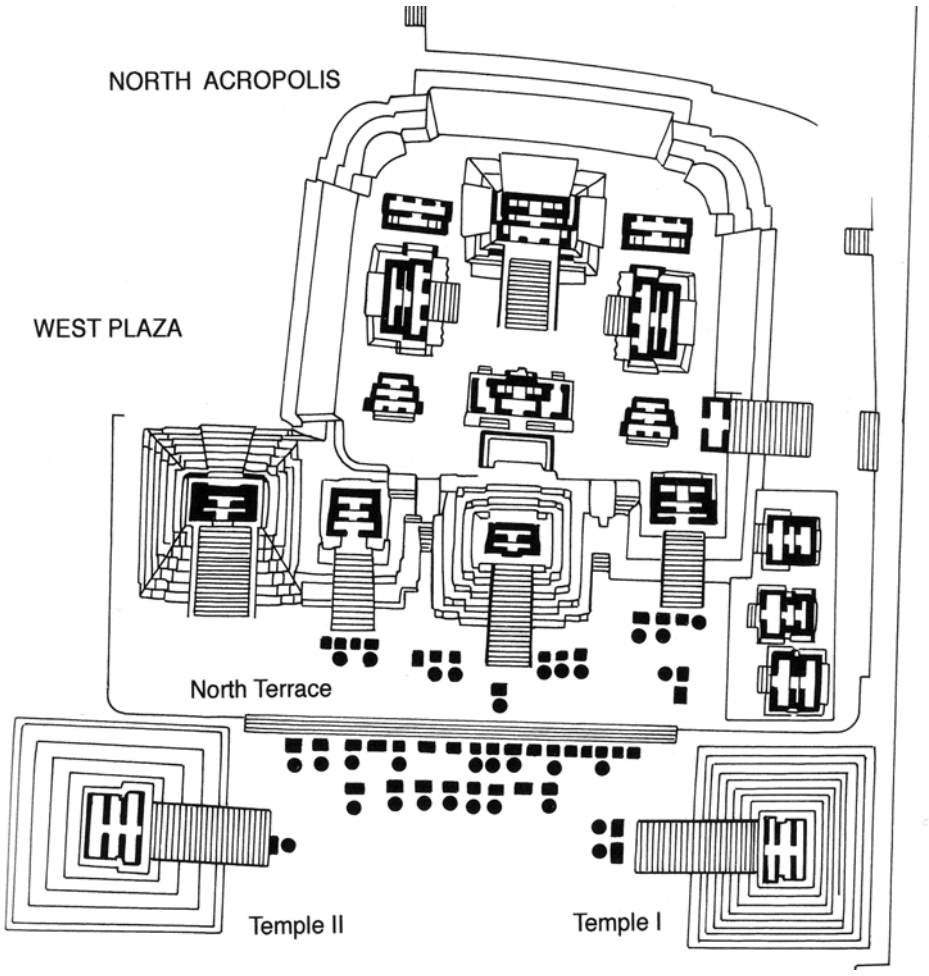


Figure 4. Plan, North Acropolis, Tikal, Guatemala (Harrison 1999)

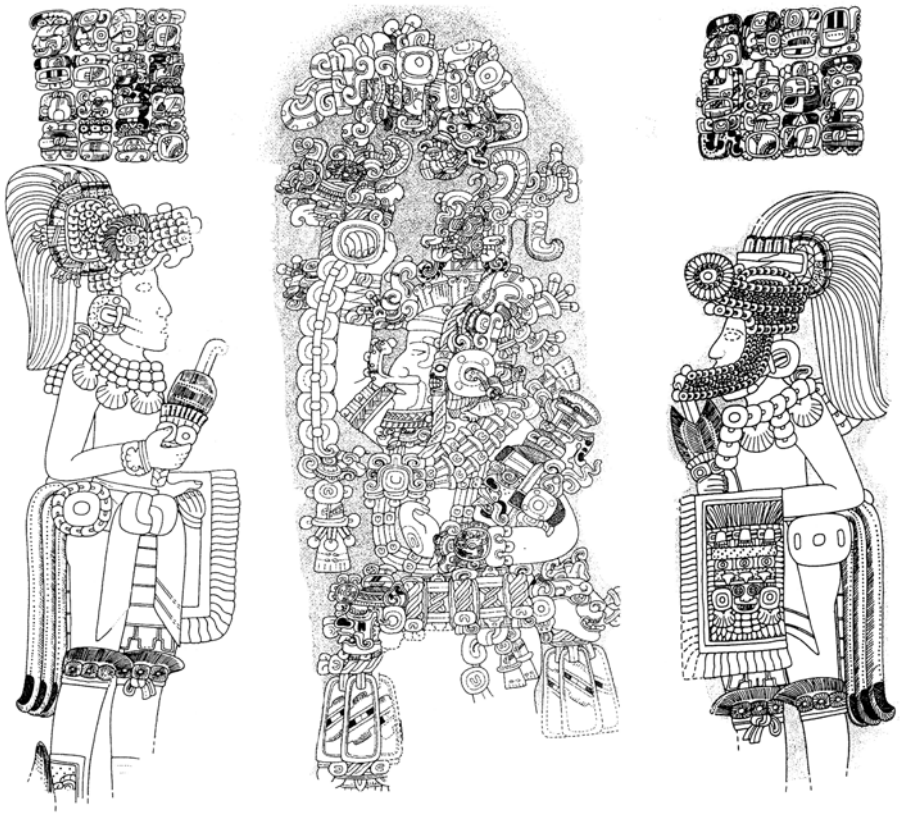


Figure 5. Stela 31, Tikal
(after Jones and Satterthwaite 1982)

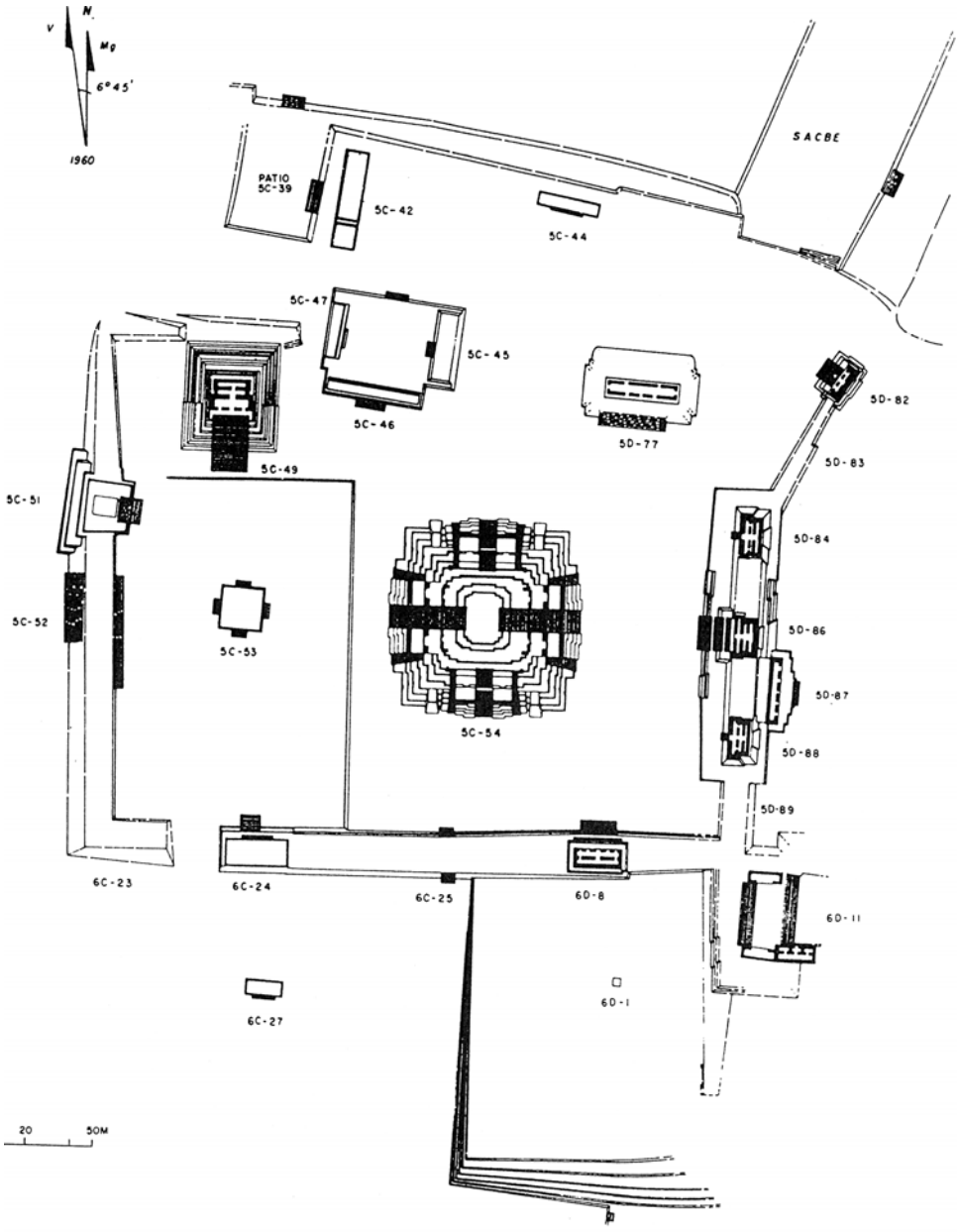


Figure 6. Plan, Mundo Perdido, Tikal (600-800AD)
(Plan by V. Fialko, M. Pullin, O. Cano; Drawing by Paulino Morales)

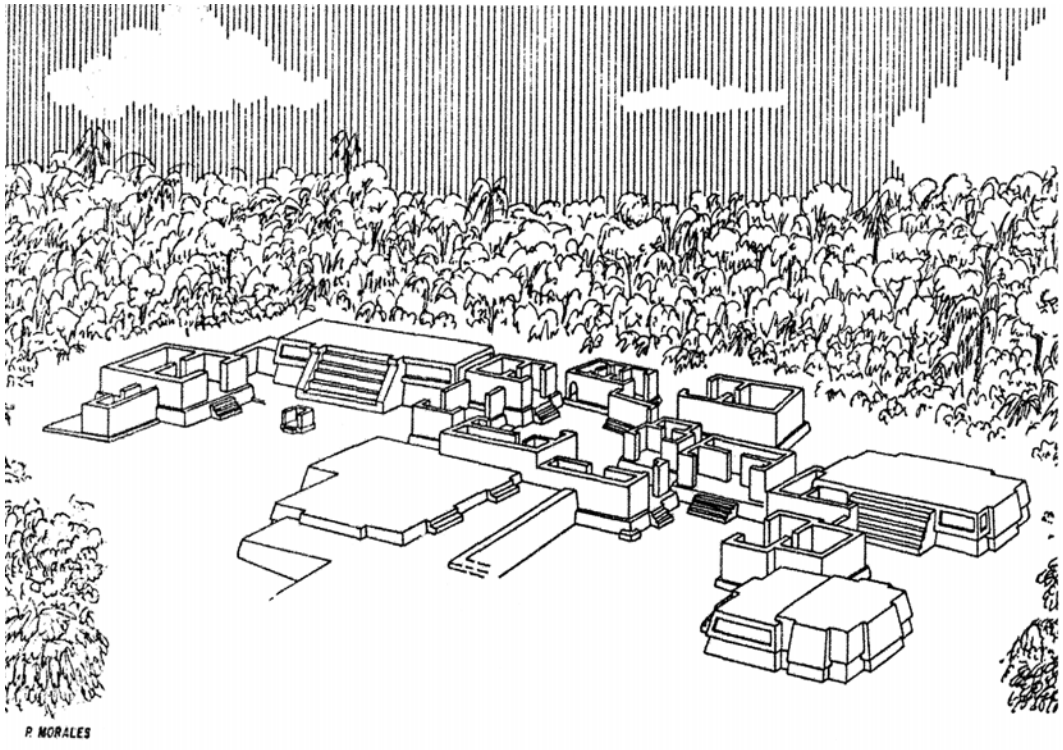


Figure 7. Reconstructed View, Group 6C-XVI, Phase 5 (300-400AD), Tikal (Drawing by Paulino Morales)

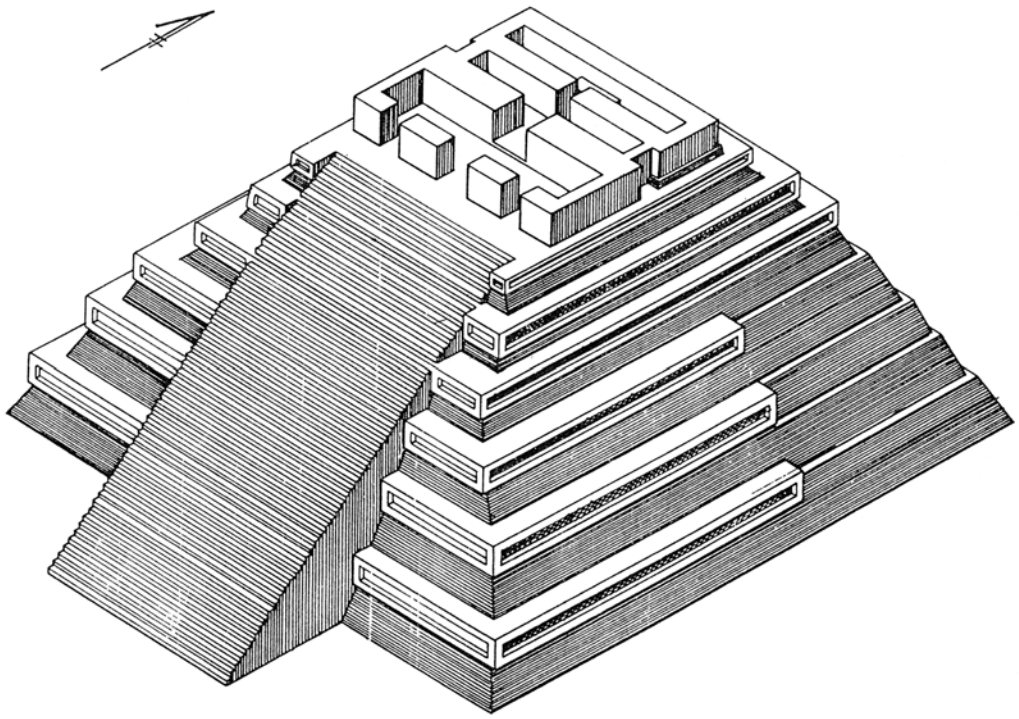


Figure 8. Reconstructed View, Structure 5C-49-5, Mundo Perdido, Tikal
(Drawing by Paulino Morales)

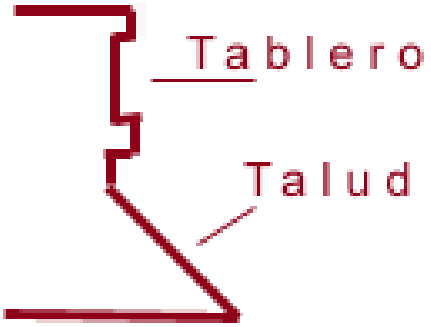


Figure 9a. Illustration of *Talud-Tablero* Features

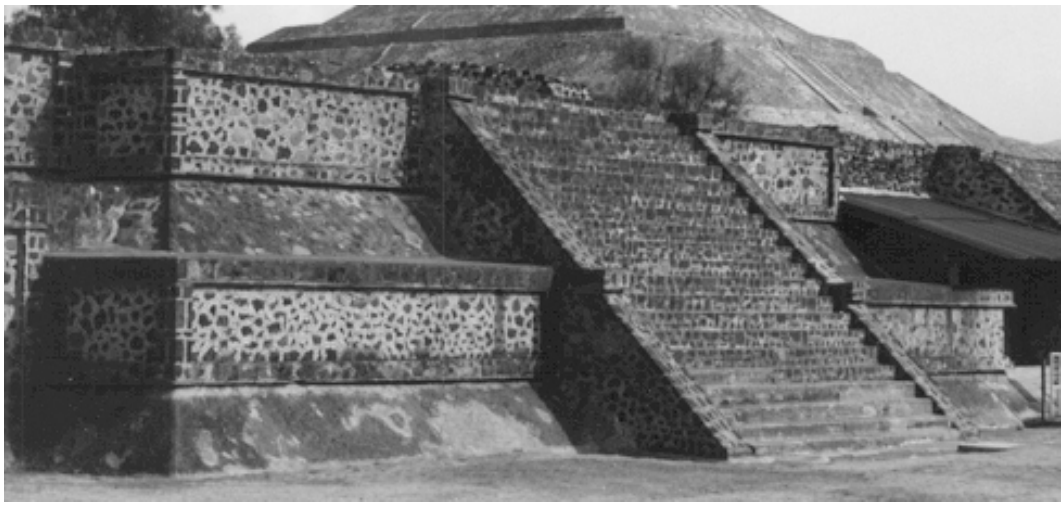


Figure 9b. *Talud-Tablero* Structure, Teotihuacán, Mexico

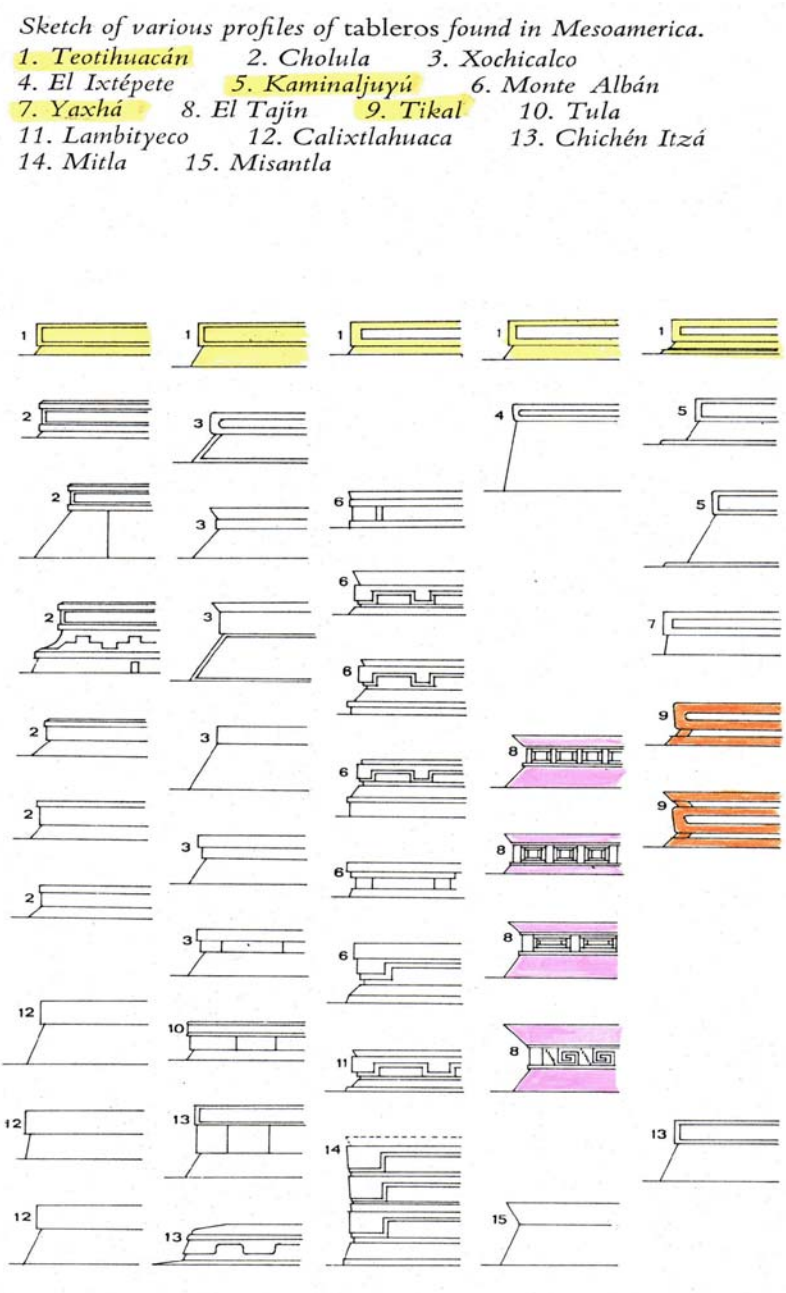


Figure 10. Regional Variations of the *Talud-Tablero* Style (Heyden and Gendrop 1975)

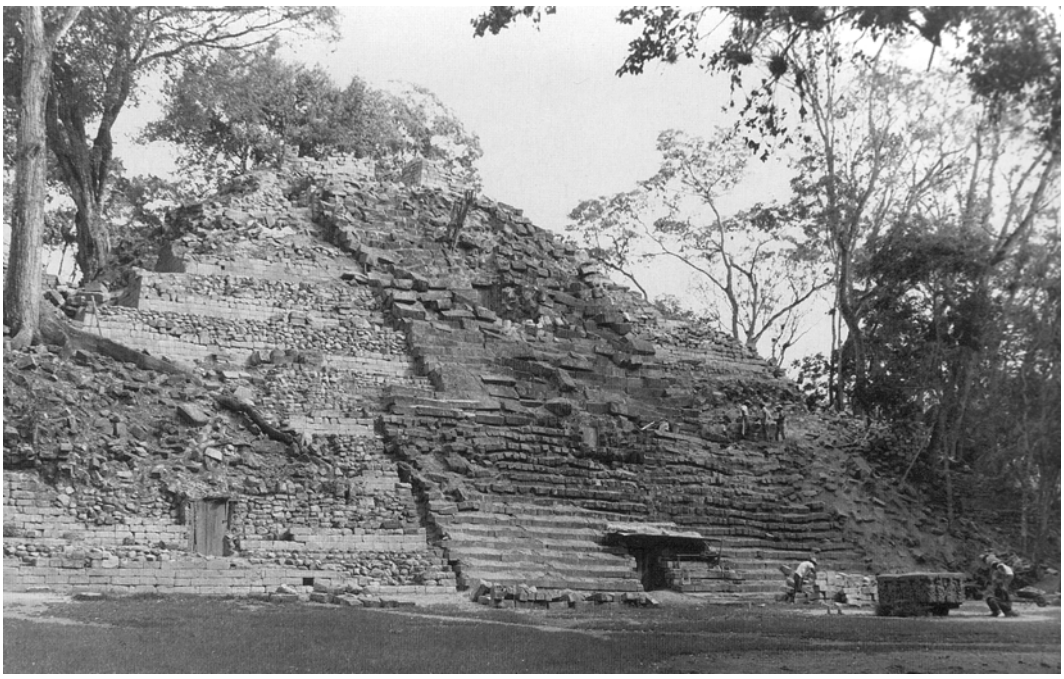


Figure 11. Structure 10L-16, Copan, Honduras

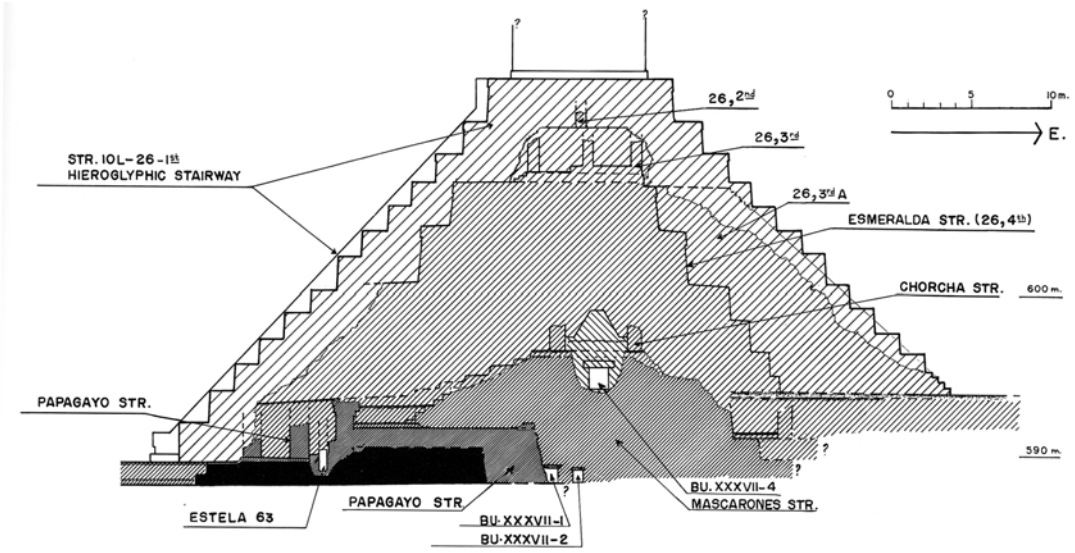


Figure 12. Cross-section, Structure 10L-26, Copan (Fash 1994)

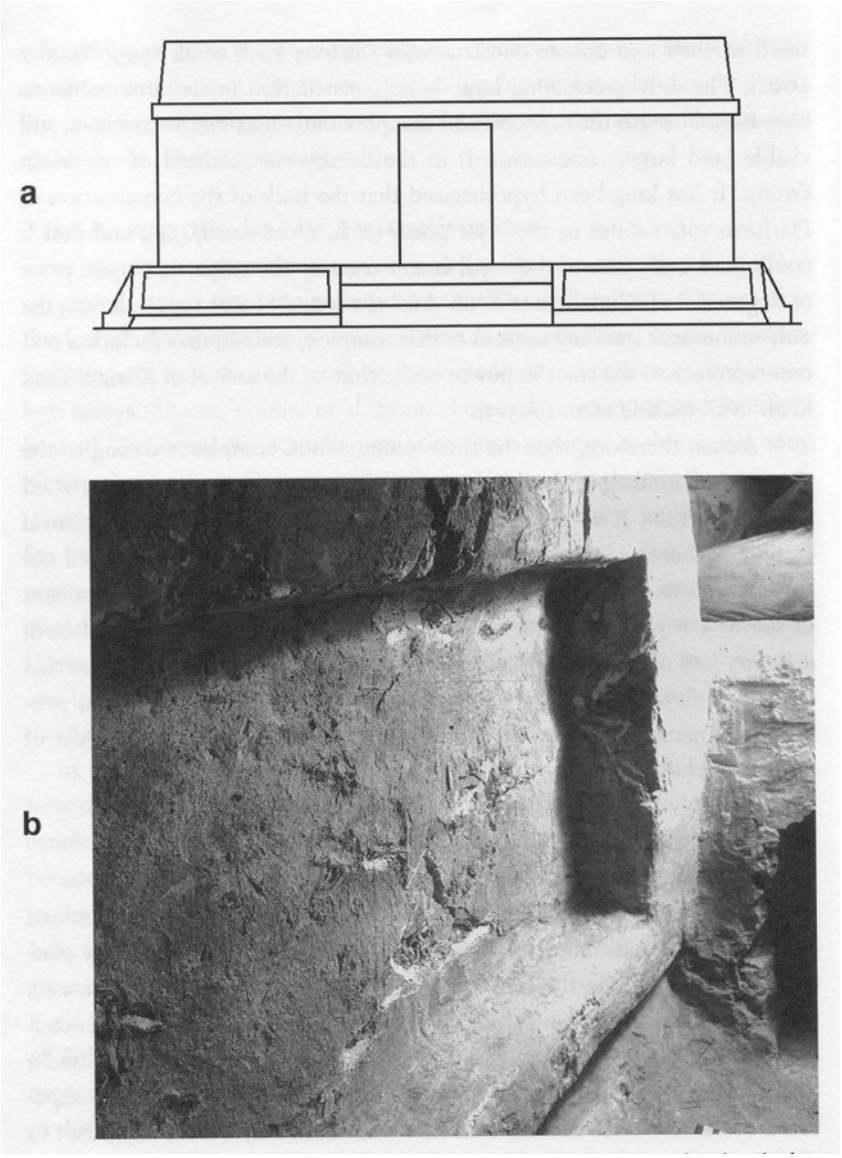


Figure 13a. Reconstruction, Hunal Structure, Copan (Drawing by David Browning)
Figure 13b. View, *talud-tablero* substructure, Hunal

Figure 14a. Incensario, Teotihuacan, Mexico

Figure 14b. Incensario, Guatemala Highlands

Figure 15. Stela 26, Piedras Negras, Guatemala
(Drawing by John Montgomery)

Figure 16. Stela 5, Uaxactun, Guatemala
(Drawing by Ian Graham)

Figure 17. Altar Q, Copan

Figure 18a. Donatello, *David*, 1425-30, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence

Figure 18b. Henry Moore, *Reclining Figure No. 4*, 1954-55, British

Figure 19. Raphael, *Madonna and Child with Book*, c. 1502-03, Italian
Norton Simon Art Foundation, Pasadena, California

Figure 20a. Salisbury Cathedral, Wiltshire, England, c.1220 AD

Figure 20b. Westminster Hall, Houses of Parliament, London, England, 1835-60 AD

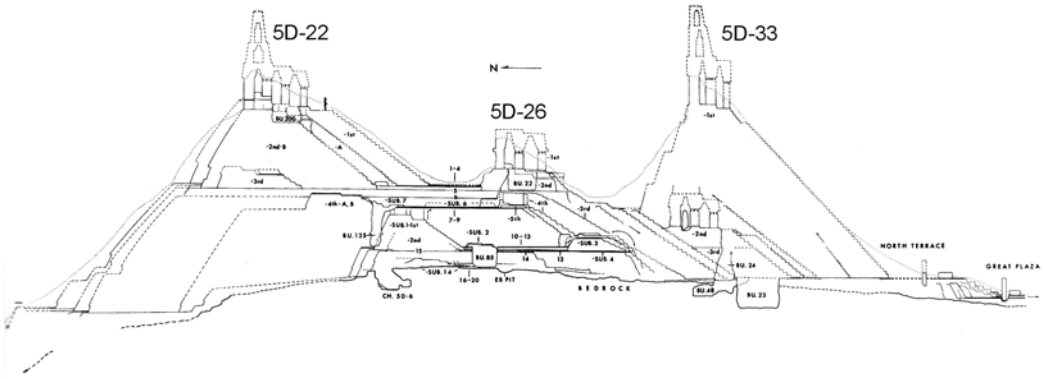


Figure 21. Cross-section, North Acropolis, Tikal (Harrison 1999)

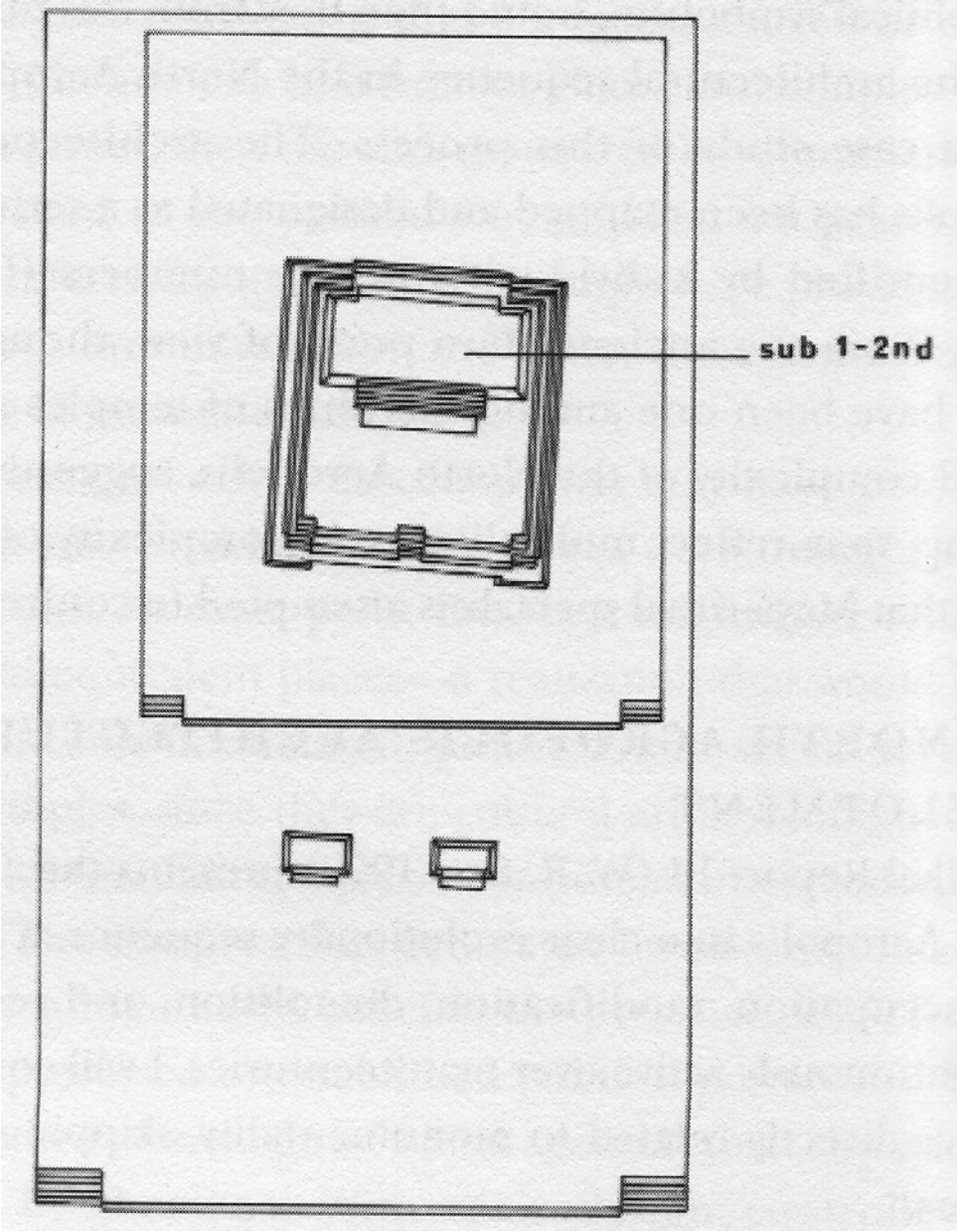


Figure 22. Plan, North Acropolis, Structure Sub-01
(Drawing by Loten, after Coe 1990)

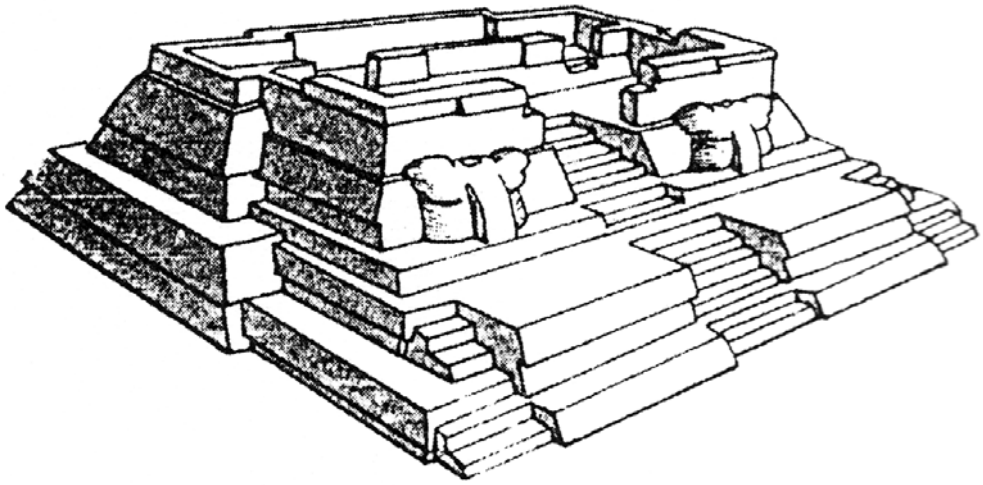


Figure 23. Reconstruction Drawing, Structure 5D-sub-1, Tikal
(Drawing by Paul Gendrop 1984)

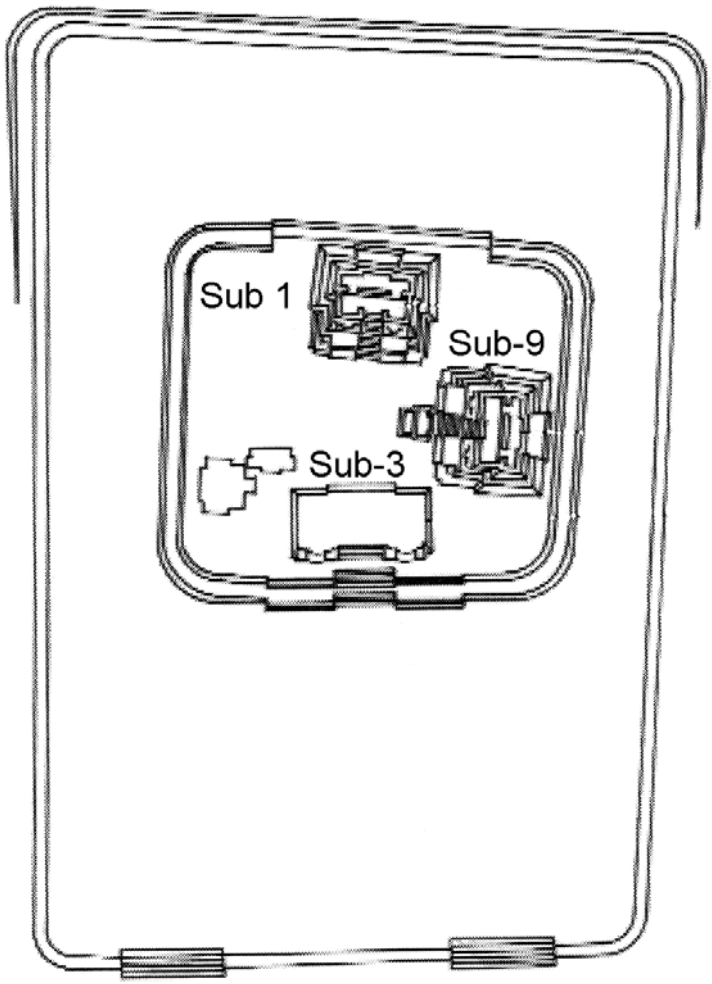


Figure 24. Plan, North Acropolis (Structures 5D-sub1,3,9/11), Tikal (Drawing by Loten, after Coe 1990)

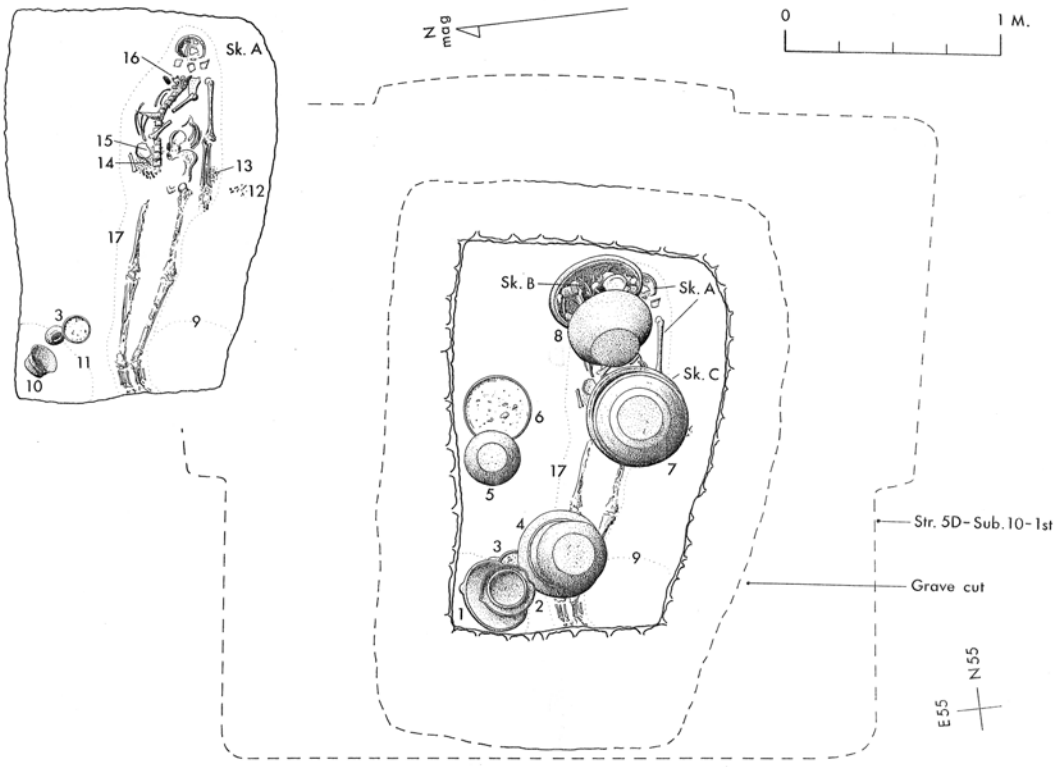


Figure 25. Plan, Burial 167, North Acropolis, Tikal (Coe 1990)

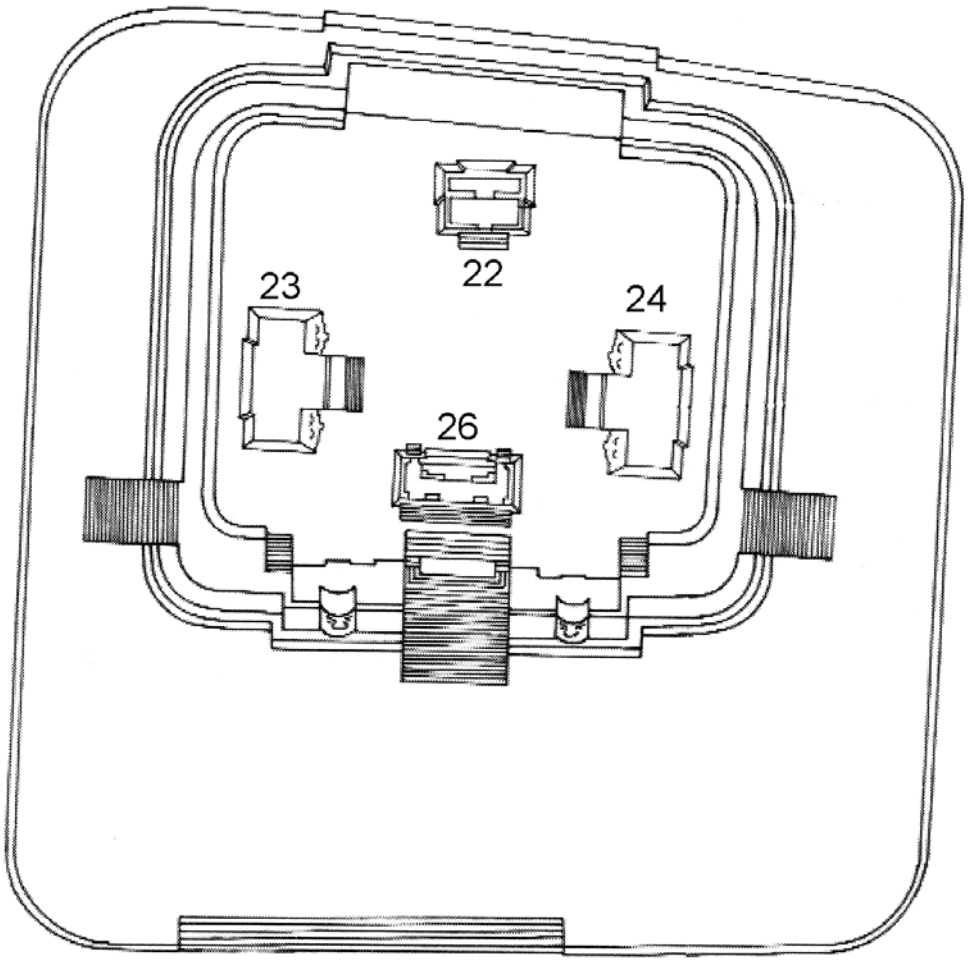


Figure 26. Plan, North Acropolis (Structures 5D-22,23,24,26), Tikal (Drawing by Loten, after Coe 1990)

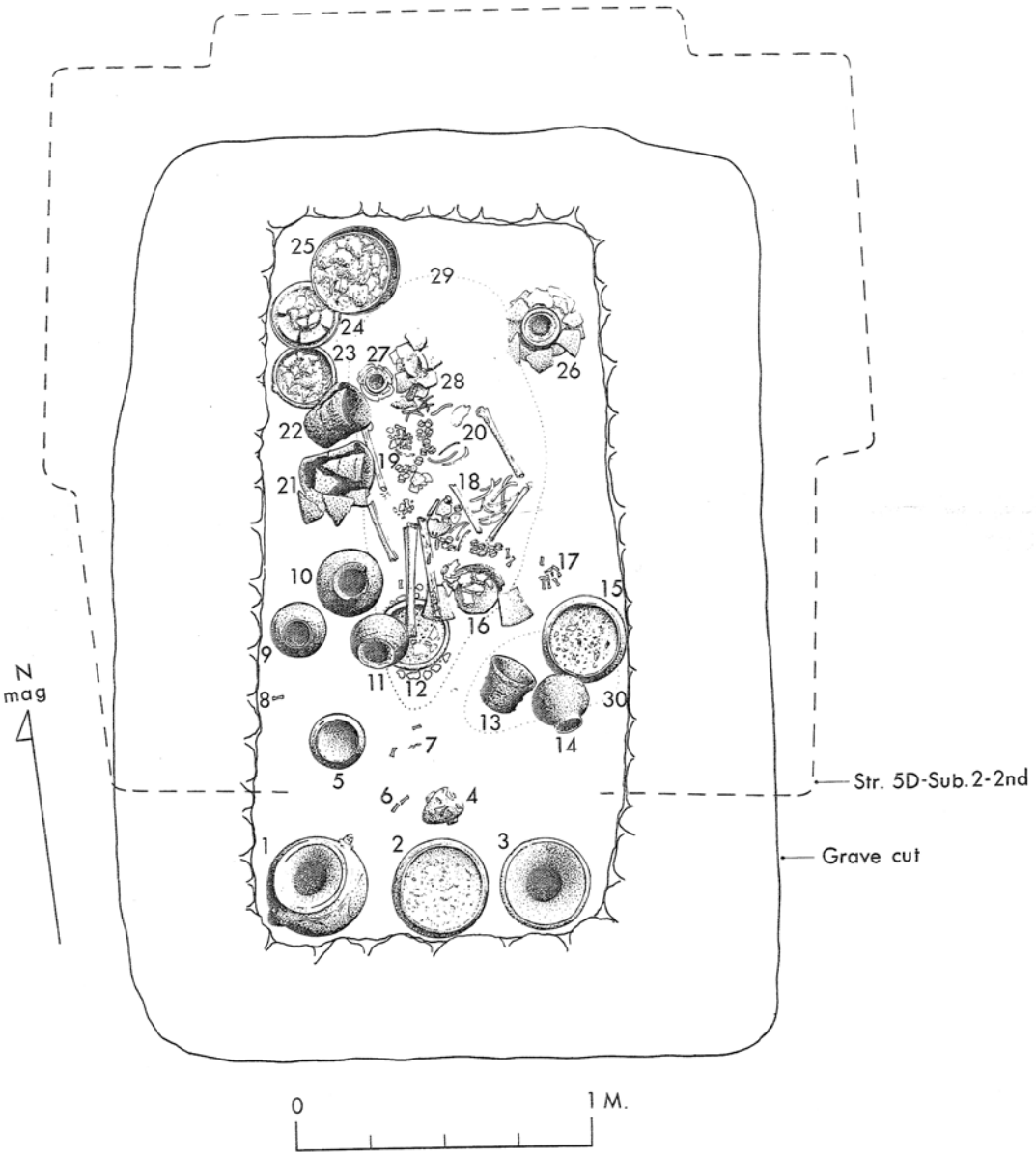


Figure 27. Plan, Burial 85, North Acropolis, Tikal (Coe 1990)

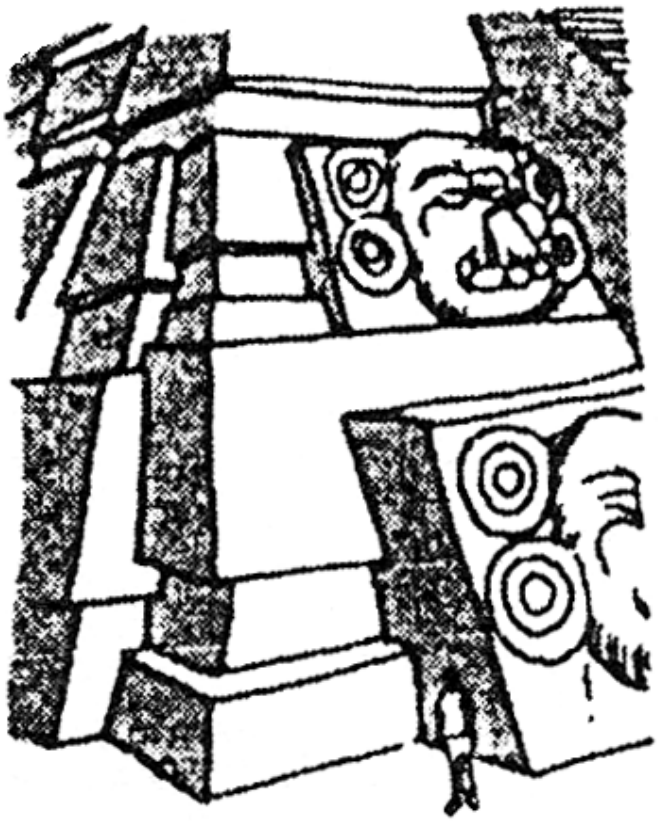


Figure 28. Exterior Reconstruction, Structure 5D-22, North Acropolis, Tikal (Gendrop 1984)

Figure 29. Structure 5D-23, North Acropolis, Tikal

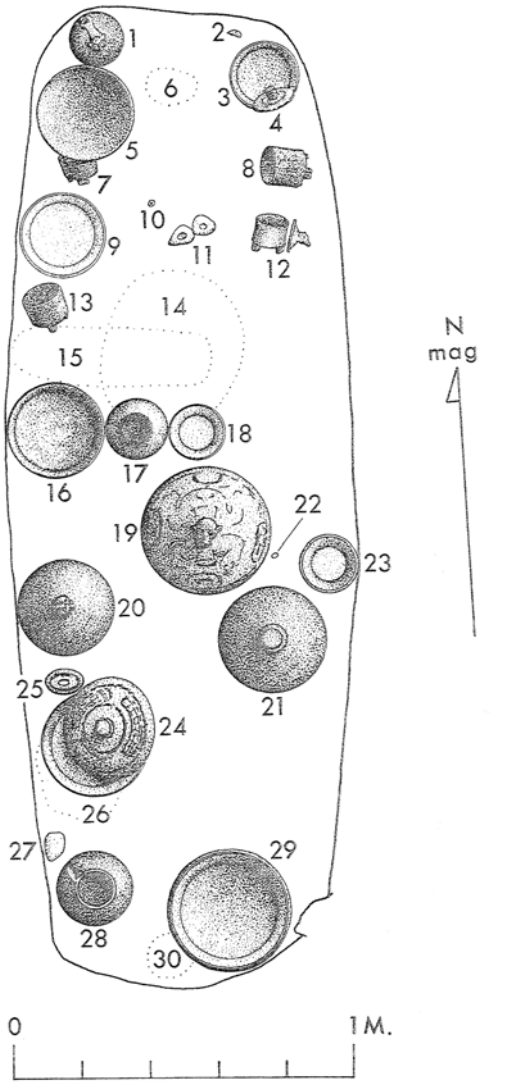


Figure 30. Plan, Burial 22, Structure 5D-26, North Acropolis, Tikal (Coe 1990)

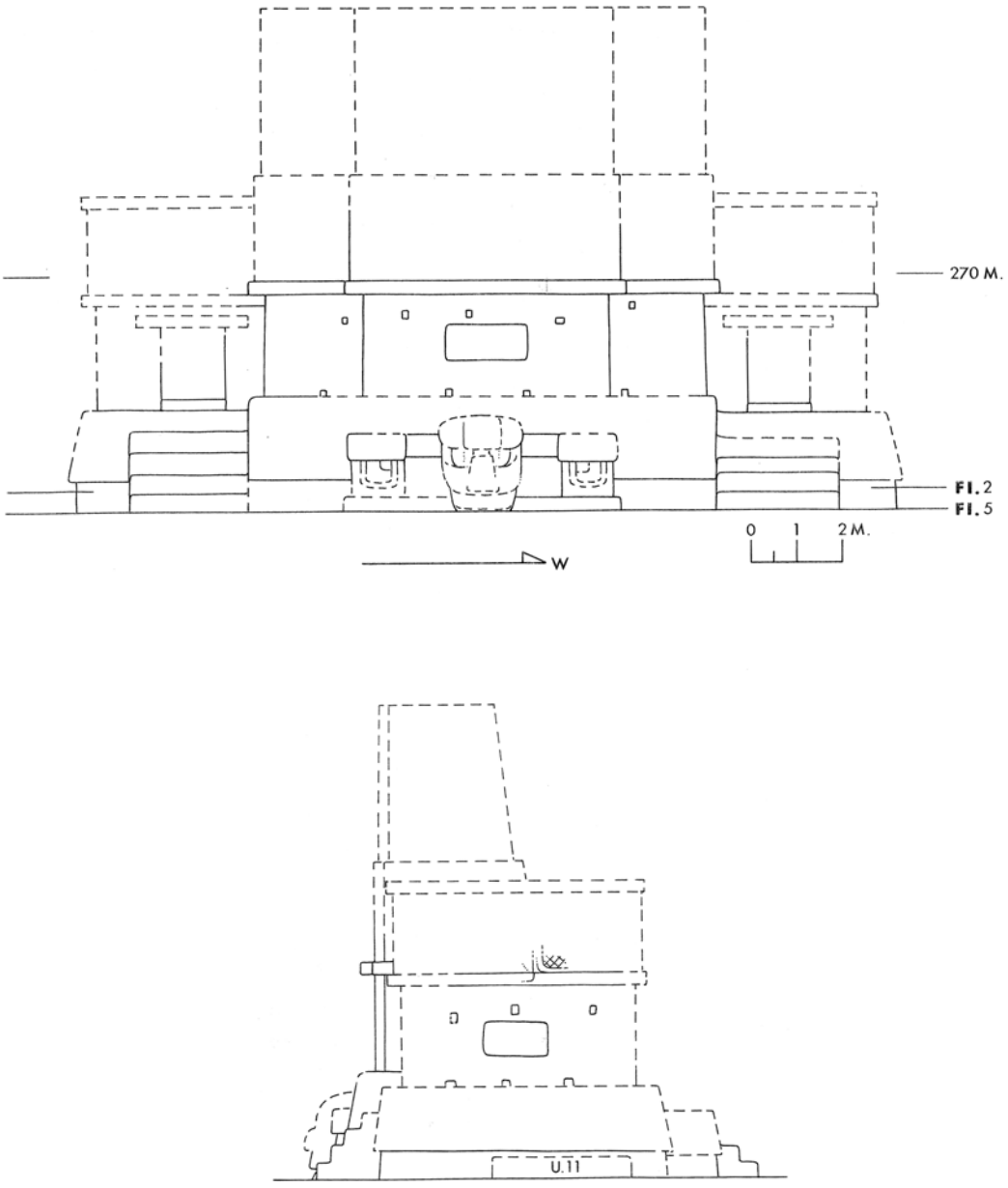


Figure 31. Structure 5D-26, North Acropolis, Tikal (Coe 1990)

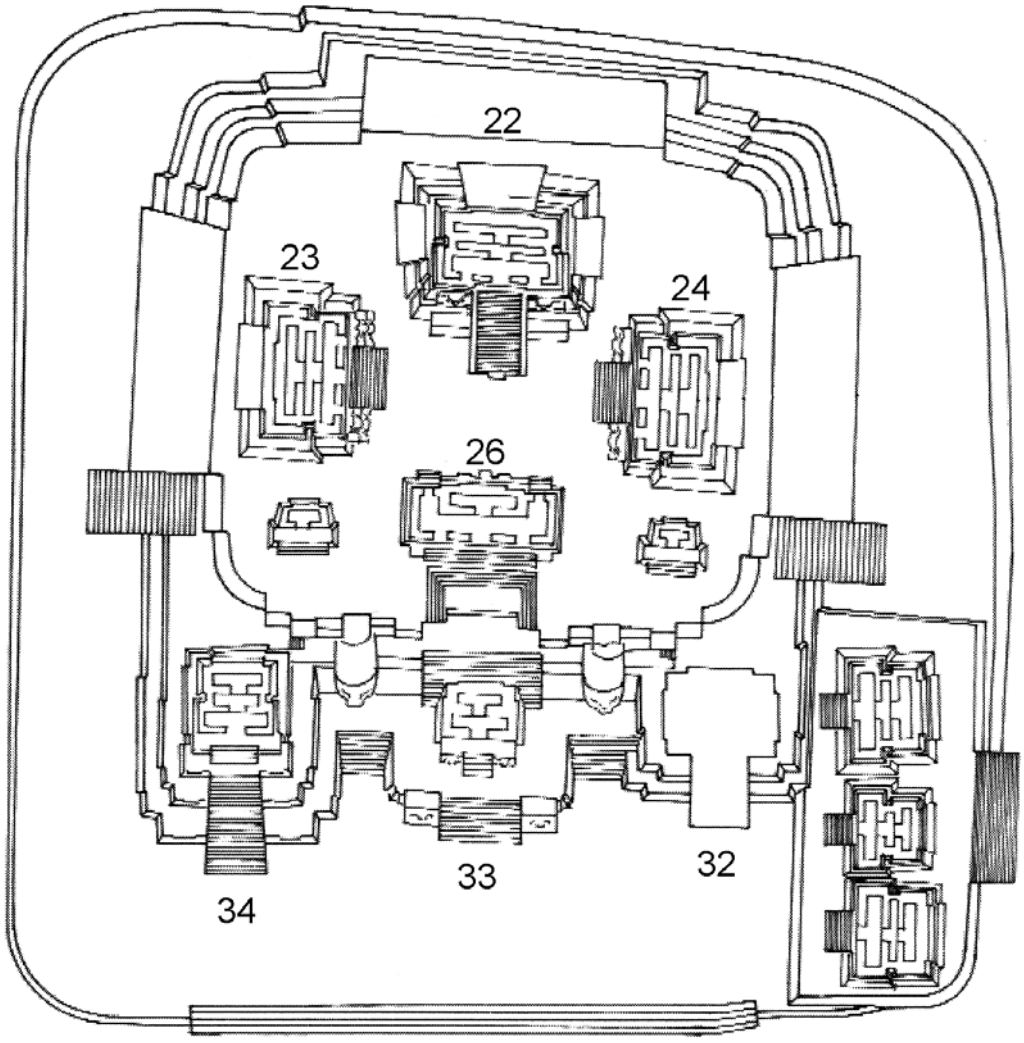


Figure 32. Plan, North Acropolis (Structures 32,33,34)
(Drawing by Loten, after Coe 1990)

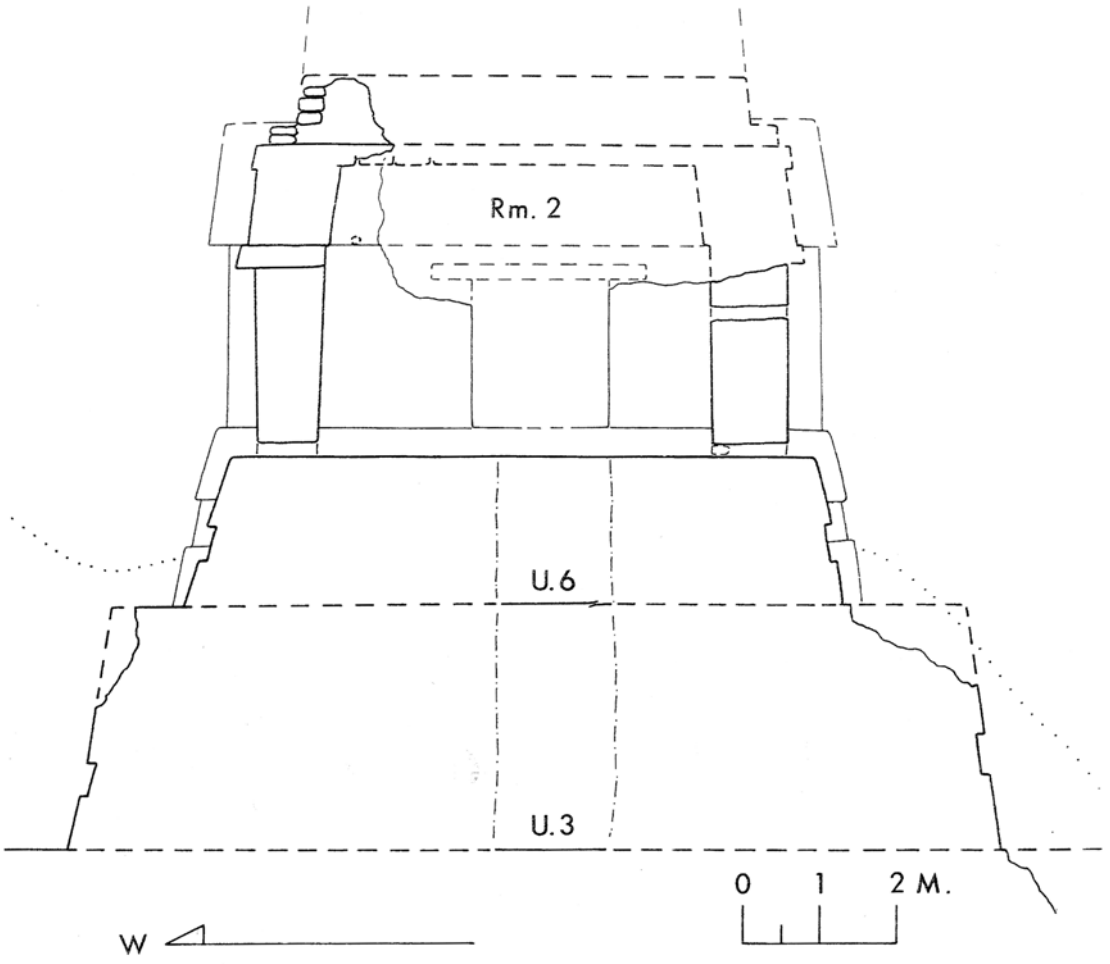


Figure 33. Structure 5D-34, North Acropolis, Tikal (Coe 1990)

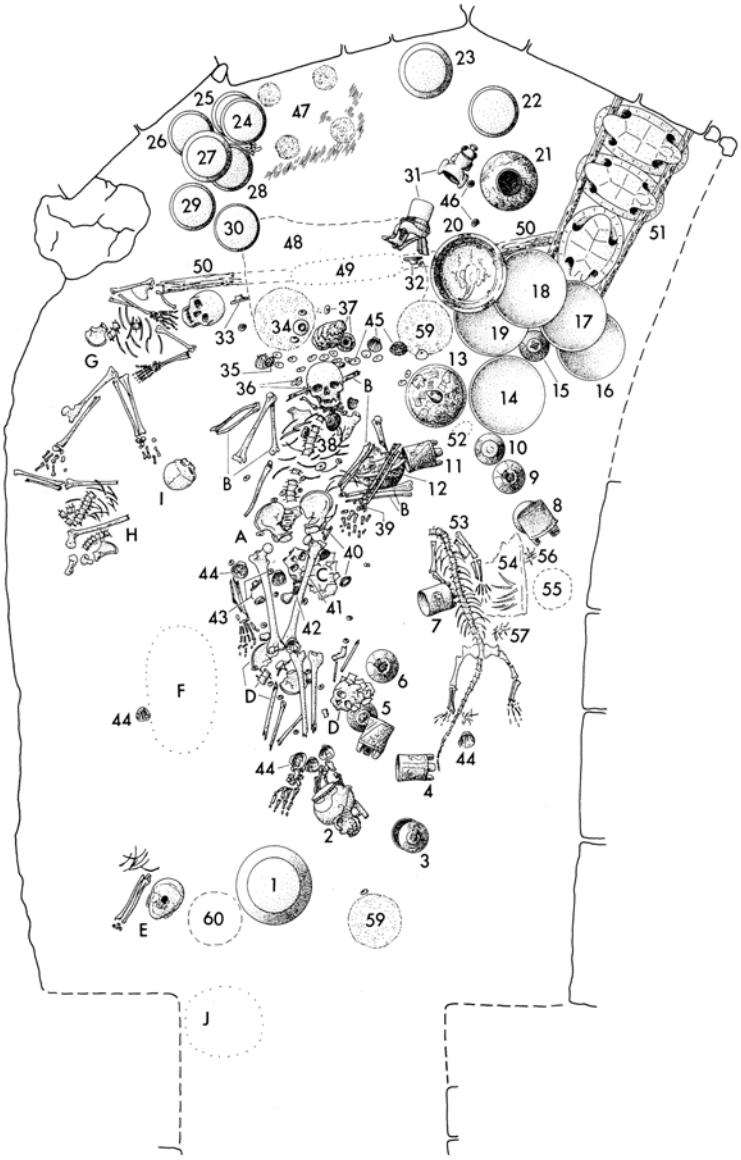


Figure 34. Plan, Burial 10, Structure 5D-34, North Acropolis, Tikal (Coe 1990)

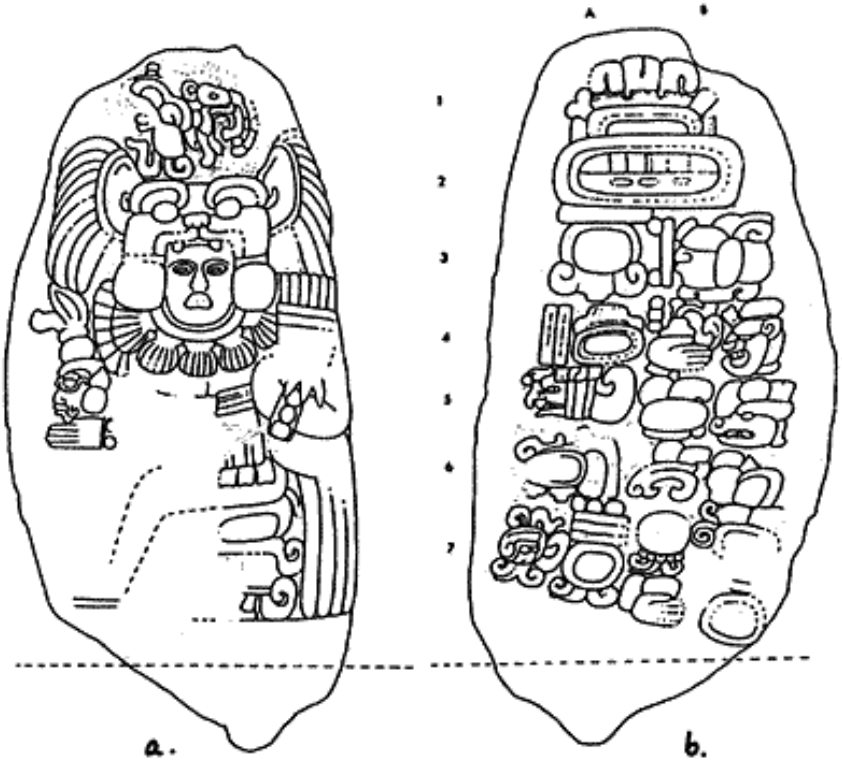


Figure 35. Stela 4, Tikal (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982)

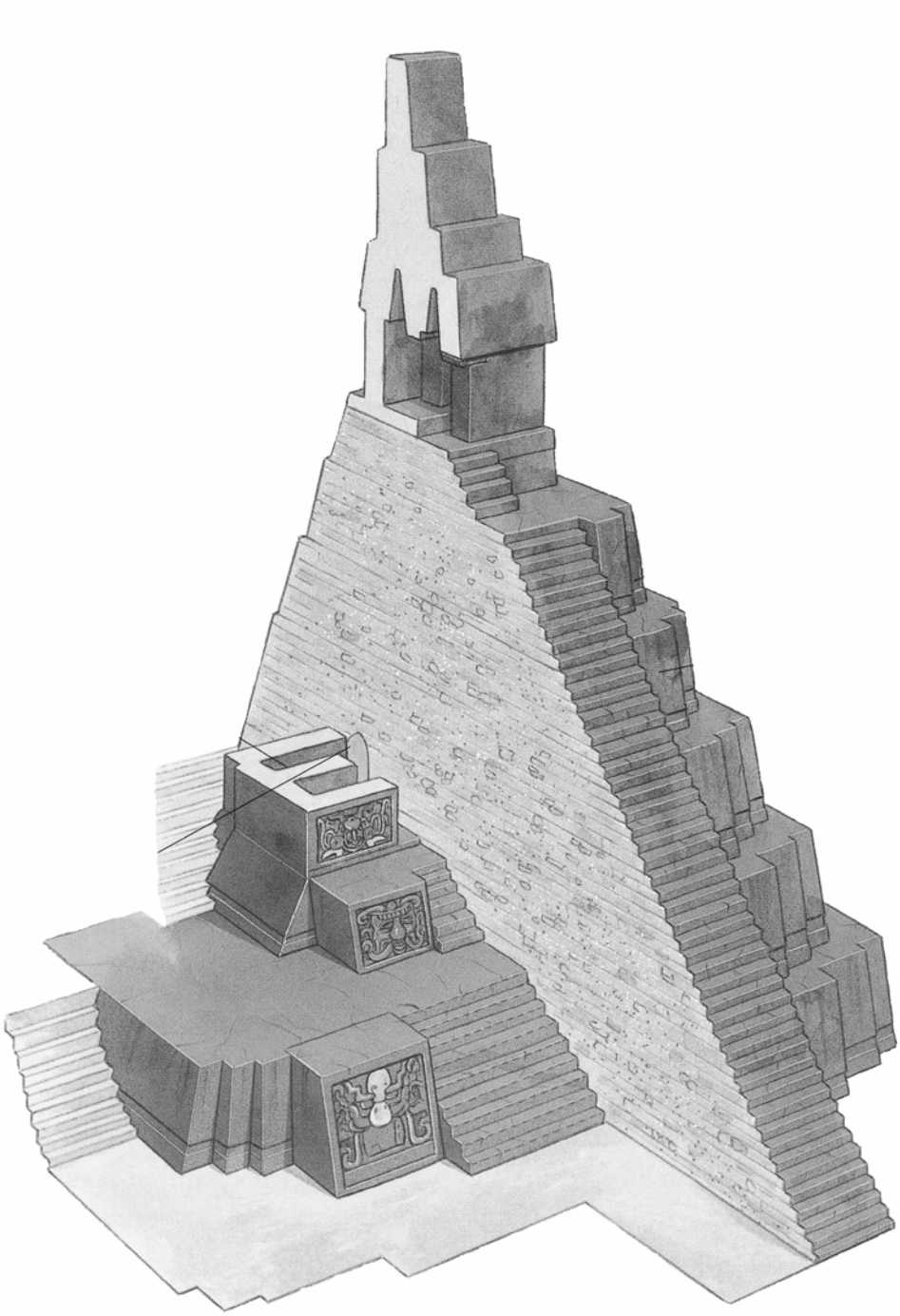


Figure 36. Structure 5D-33, North Acropolis, Tikal
(Drawing by Phillip Winton after Simon Martin)

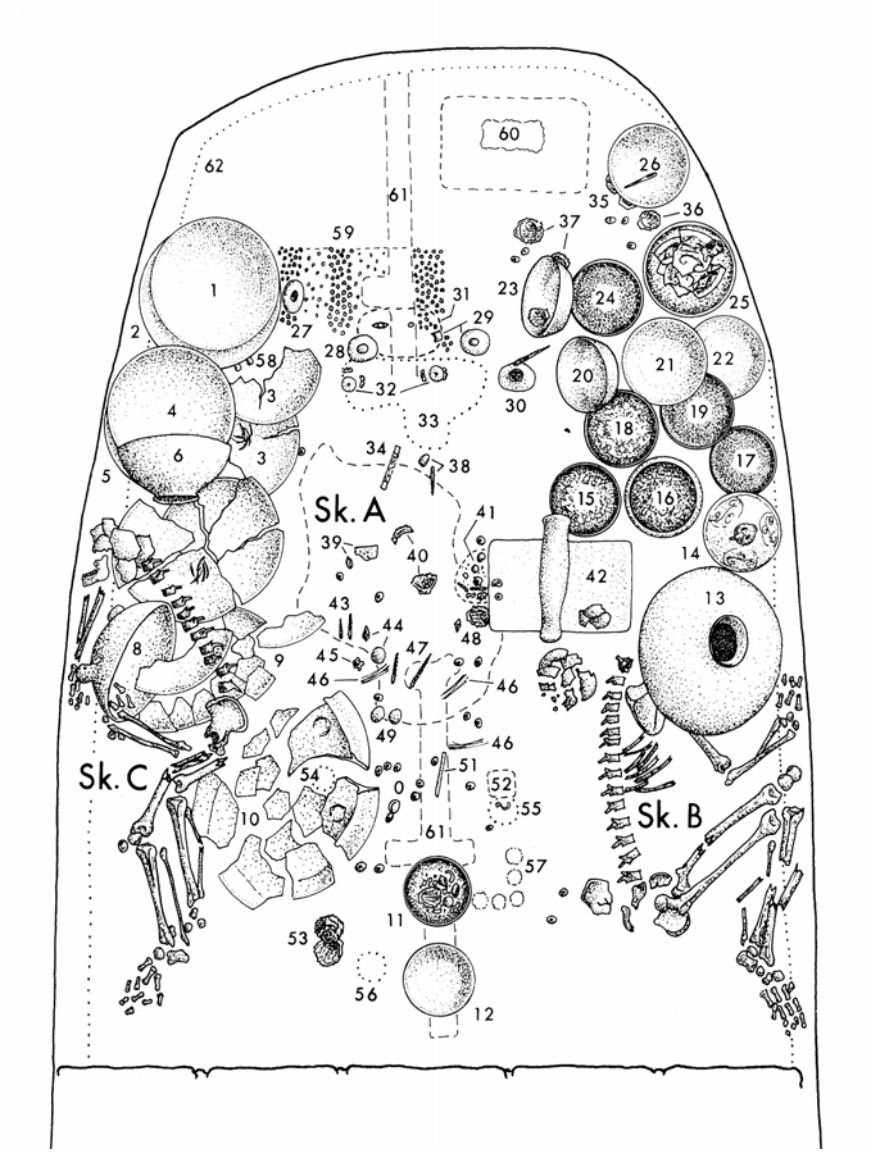


Figure 37. Plan, Burial 48, Structure 5D-33, North Acropolis, Tikal (Coe 1990)

Figure 38. Cylinder Tripod Vessel, Burial 48, Structure 5D-33, North Acropolis, Tikal

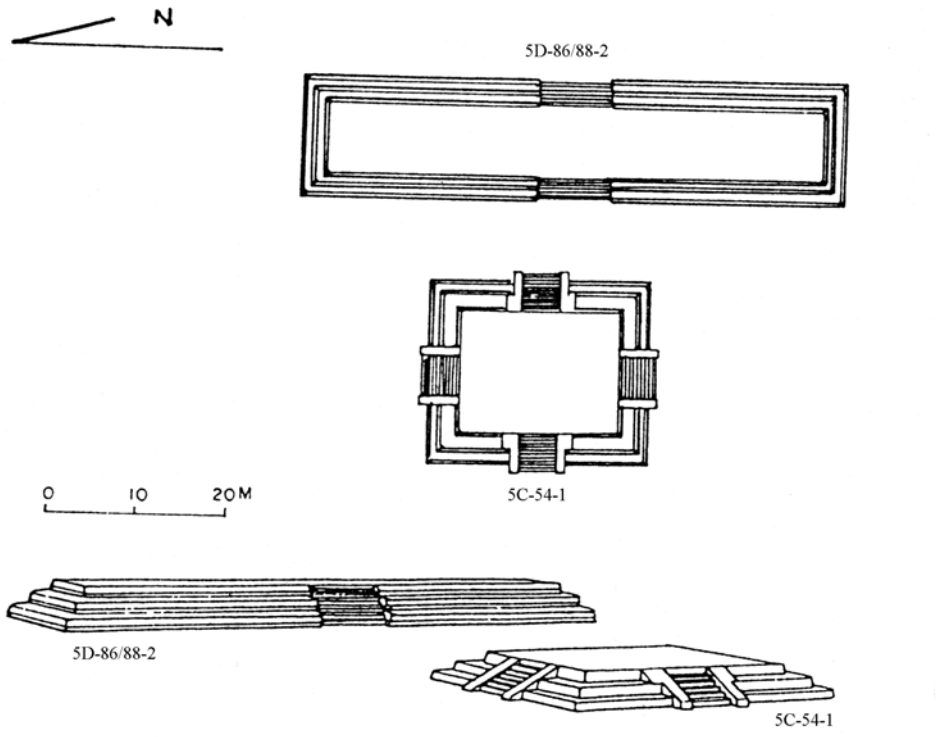


Figure 39. Plan, Mundo Perdido, Phase 1 5C-54-1 and 5D-34/88-2 (Drawing by Paulino Morales)

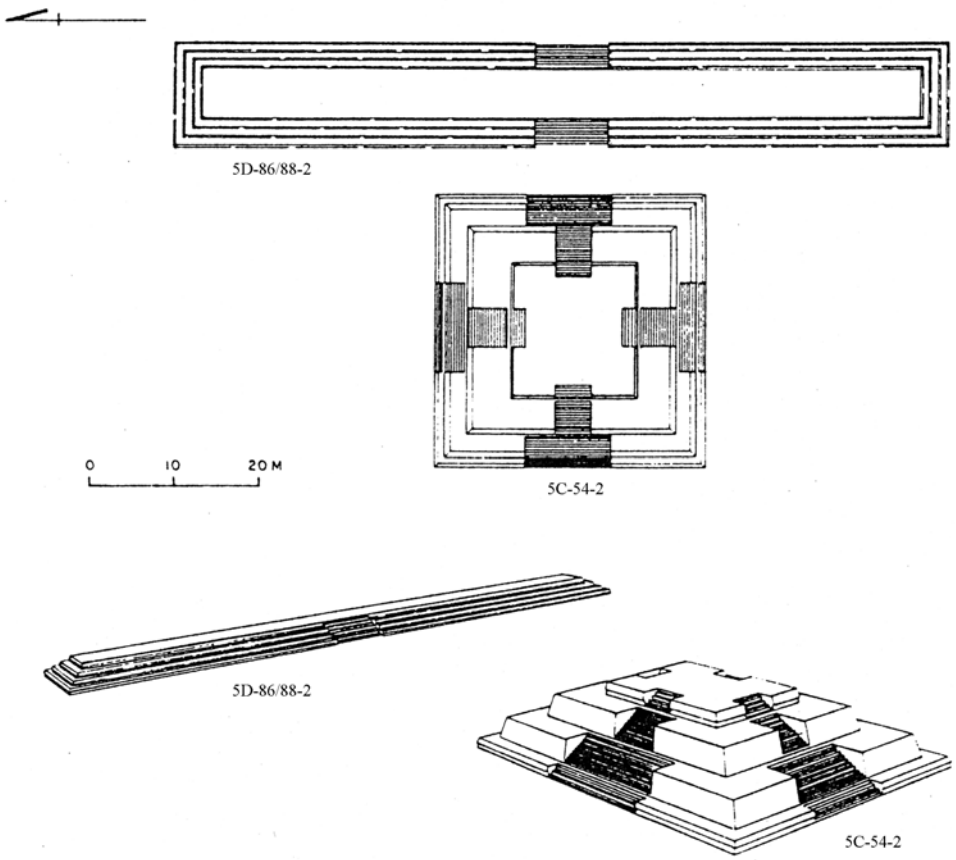


Figure 40. Plan, Mundo Perdido, Phase 2 – 5C-54-2 and 5D-84/88-2
(Drawing by Paulino Morales)

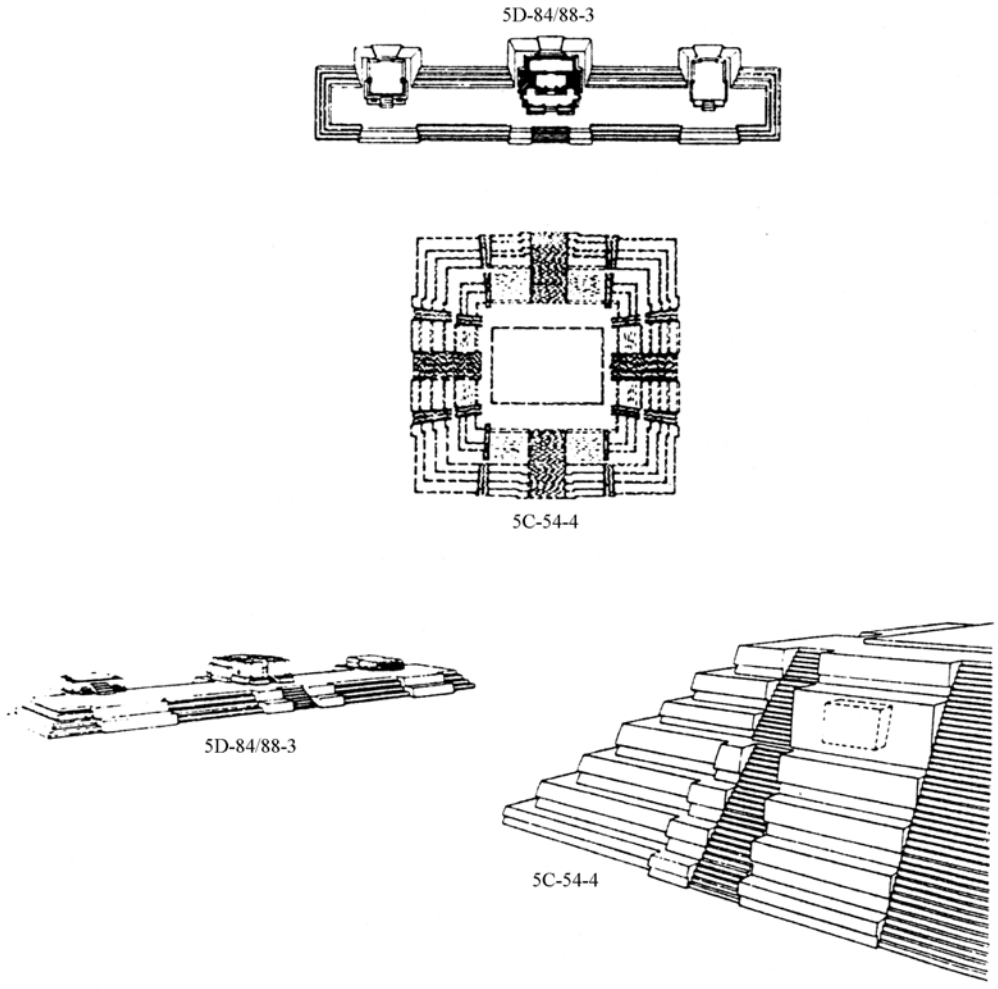


Figure 41. Plan, Mundo Perdido, Phase 4 – 5C-54-4 and 5D-84/88-3 (Drawing by Paulino Morales)

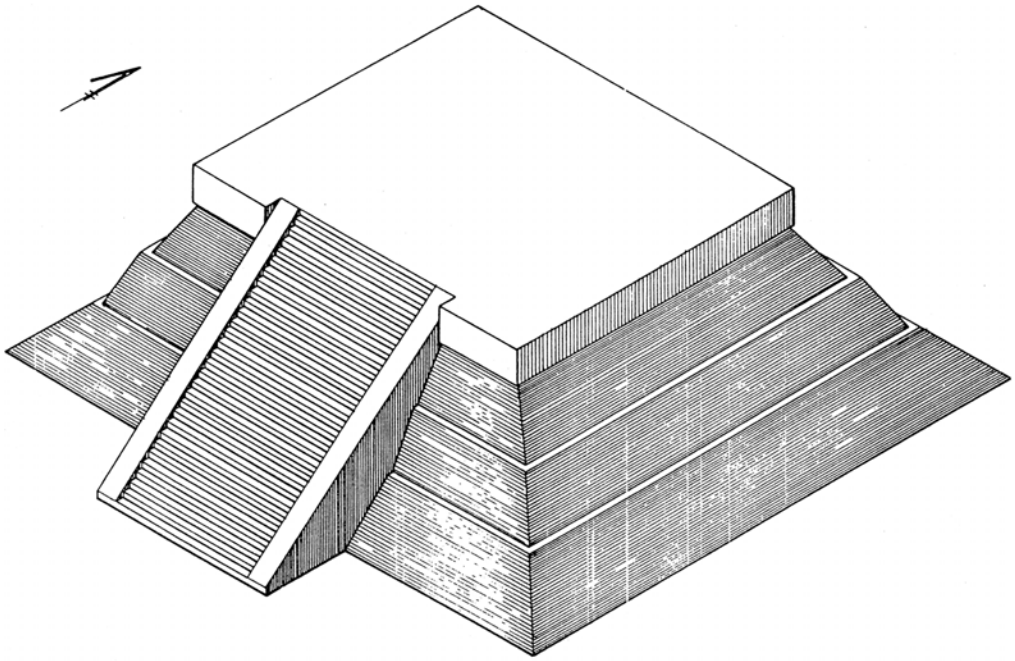


Figure 42. Reconstruction, Structure 5D-49-1, Mundo Perdido, Tikal (Drawing by Paulino Morales)

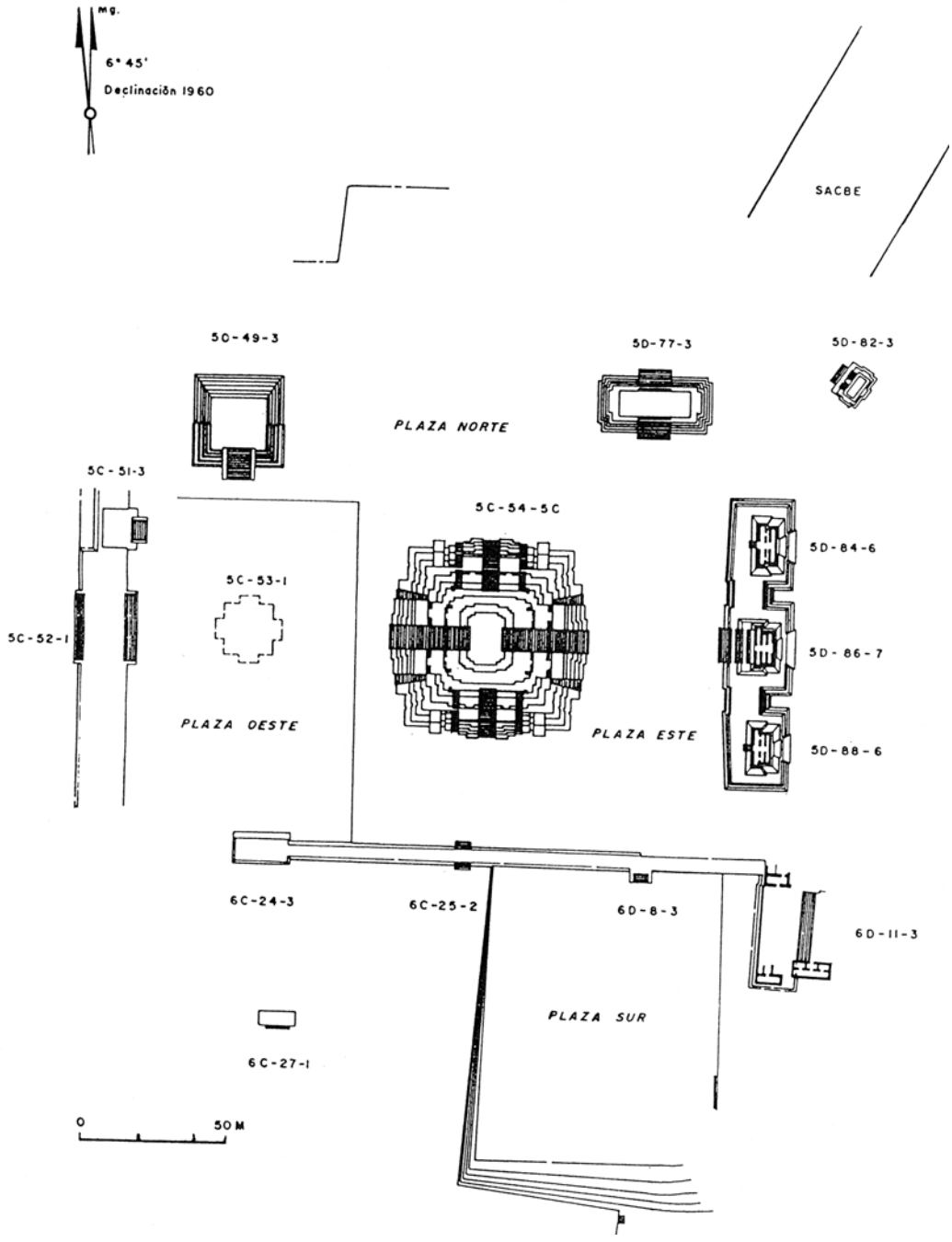


Figure 43. Plan, Mundo Perdido, Manik 2 (c.250-300 AD)
(Plan by V. Fialko, M. Pullin, O. Cano; Drawing by Paulino Morales)

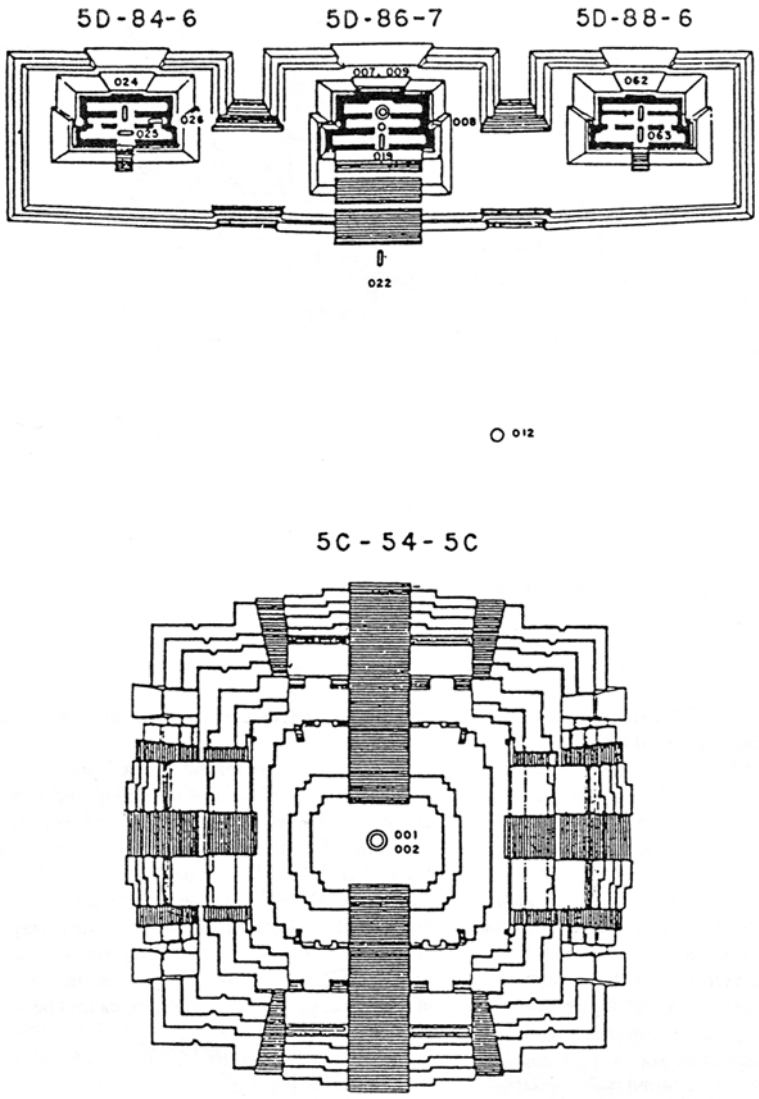


Figure 44. Plan, 5C-54-5 and 5D-84/88-6/7, Mundo Perdido, Tikal (Drawing by Paulino Morales)

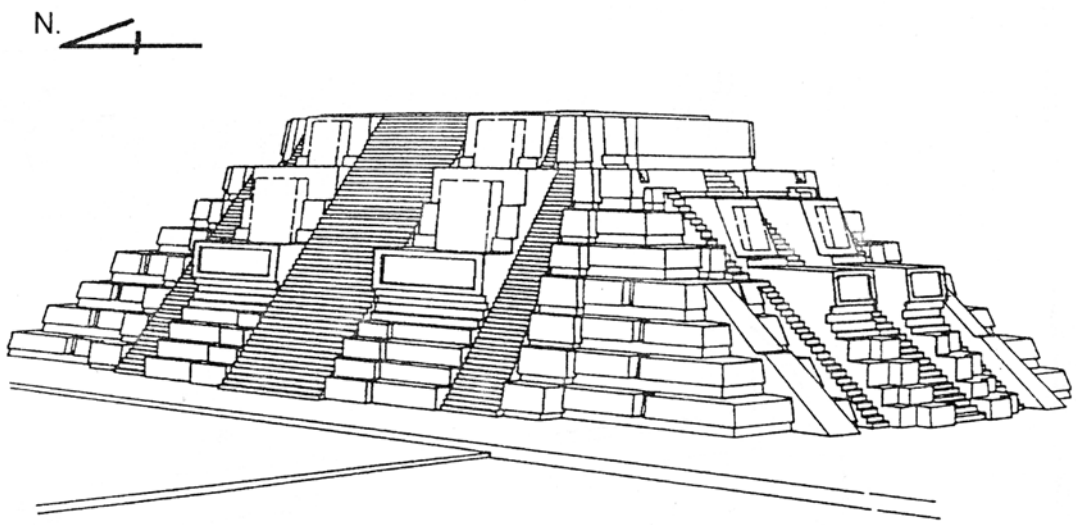


Figure 45. Reconstruction, Structure 5C-54-5, Mundo Perdido, Tikal
(Drawing by Paulino Morales)

Figure 46. Mural Fragment, Structure 5D-86, Mundo Perdido, Tikal
(Drawing Paulino Morales)

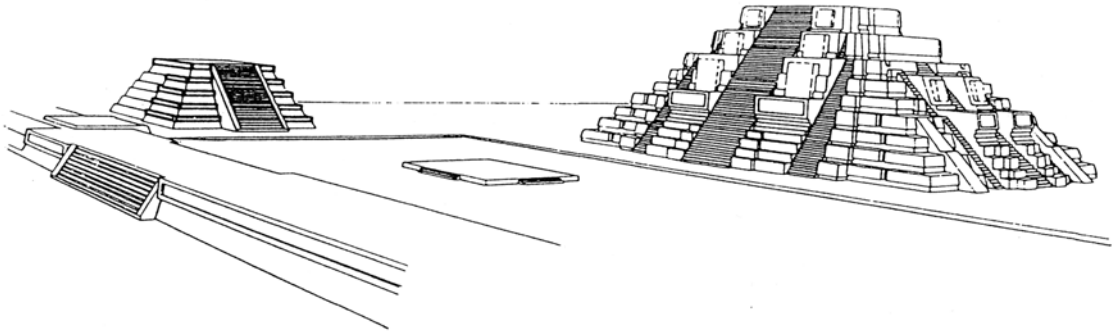


Figure 47. Reconstruction, Structures 5C-54-5 and 5C-49-5, Mundo Perdido, Tikal (Drawing by Paulino Morales)

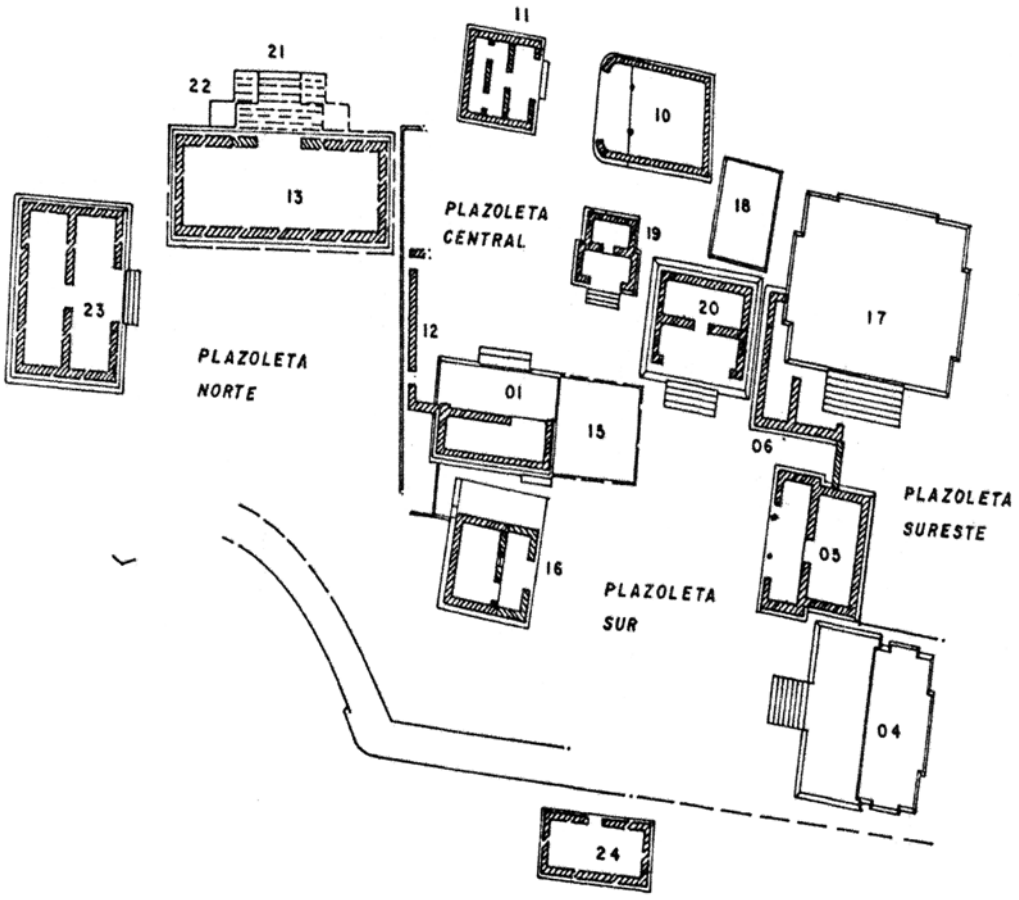


Figure 48. Plan, Group 6C-XVI, Phase 2, Tikal

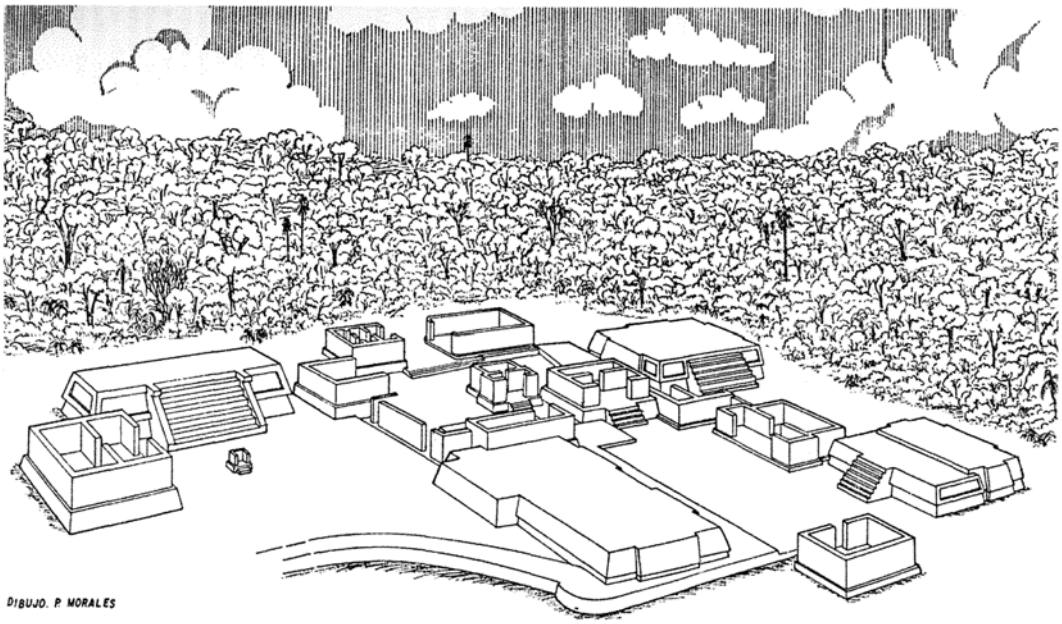


Figure 49. Reconstruction, Group 6C-XVI, Phase 3, Tikal
(Drawing by Paulino Morales)

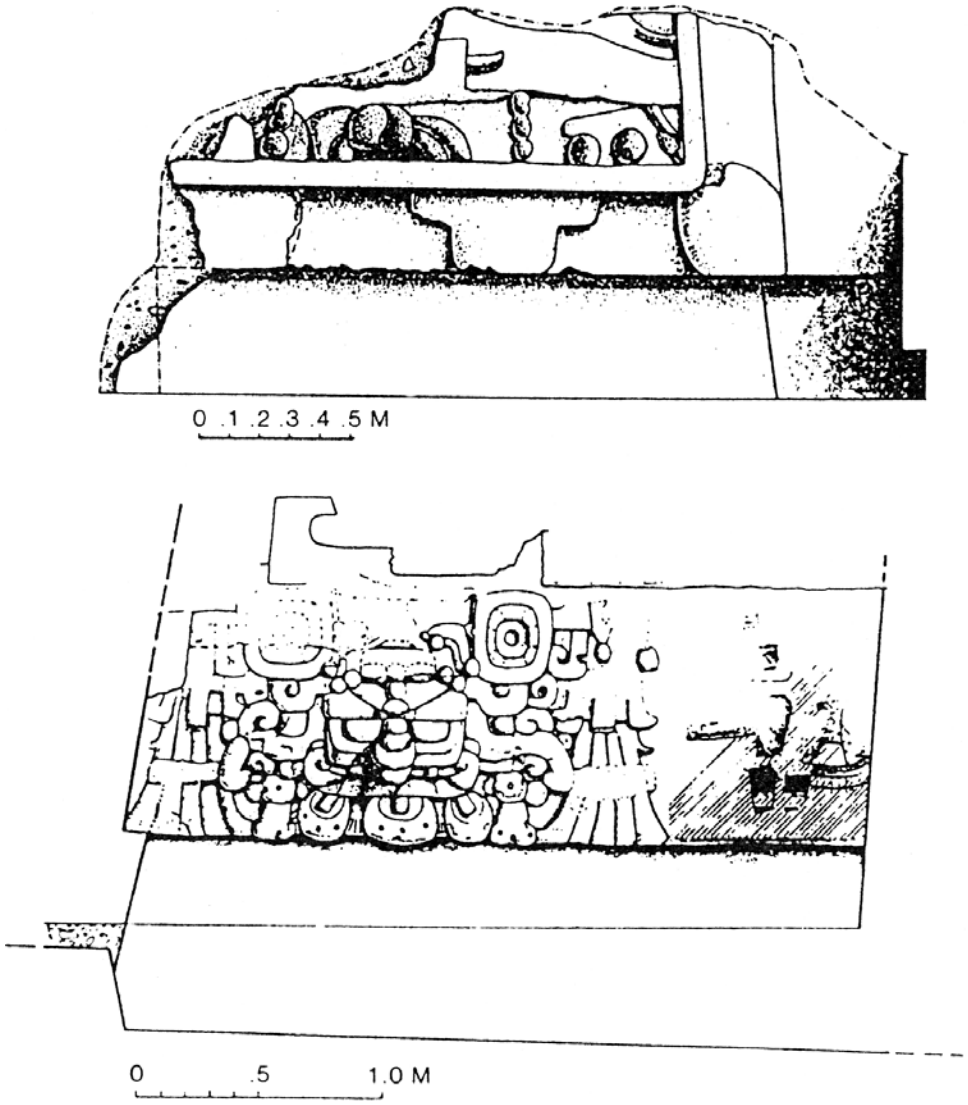


Figure 50. Façade Sculpture, Structure Sub-04, Group 6C-XVI, Tikal

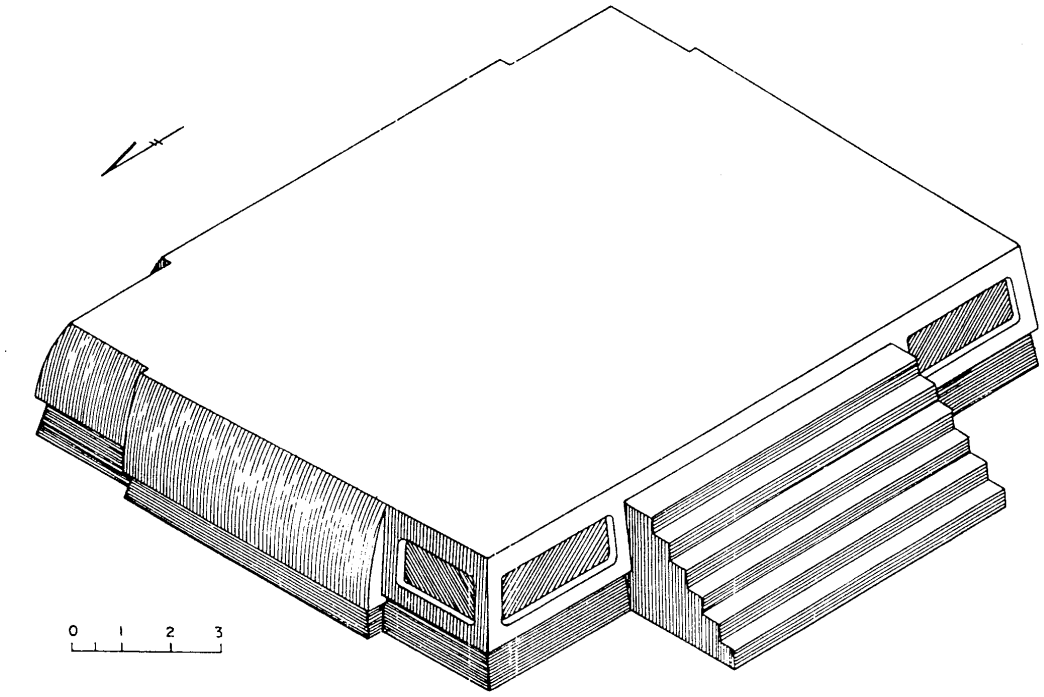
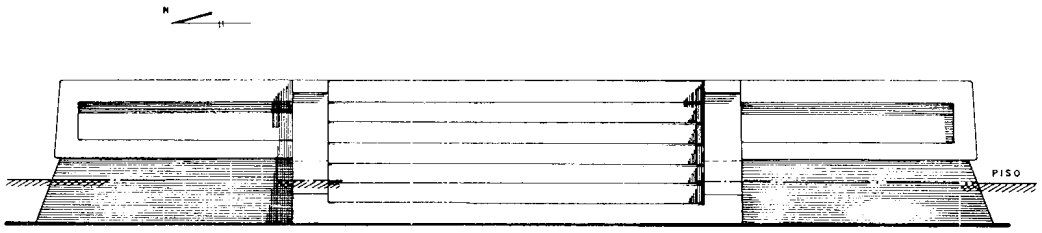
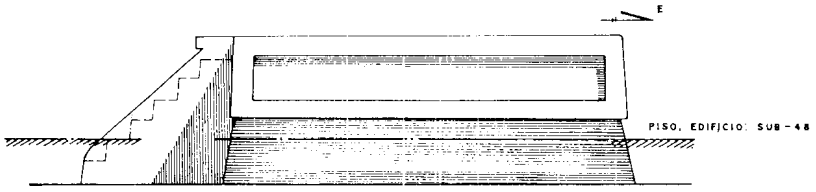


Figure 51. Structure Sub-17, Group 6C-XVI, Tikal
(Drawing by Paulino Morales)



West Elevation



South Elevation

Figure 52. Structure Sub-26, Group 6C-XVI, Tikal
(Drawing by Paulino Morales)

Figure 53. Mural Fragment, Structure Sub-21, Group 6C-XVI, Tikal

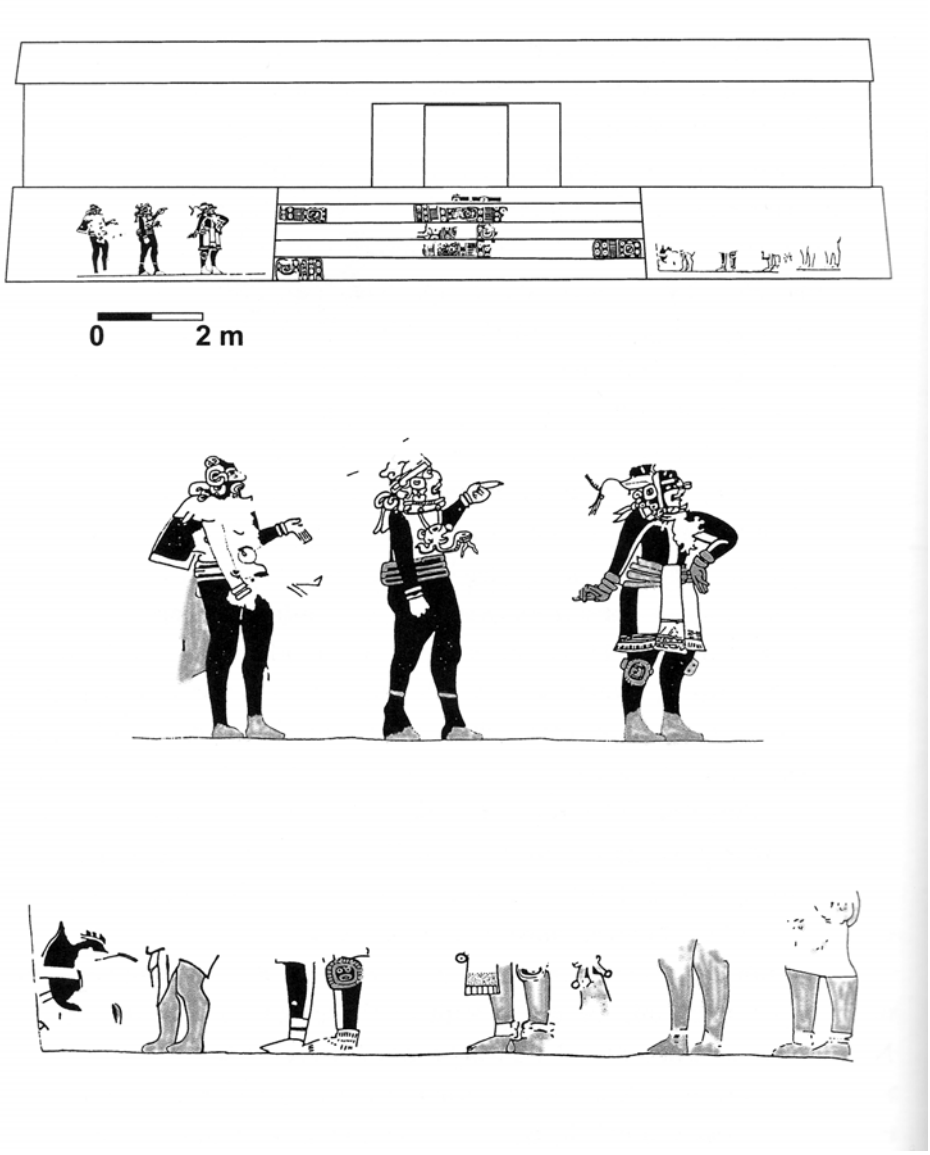


Figure 54. Reconstruction and Murals, Structure Sub-39, Group 6C-XVI, Tikal

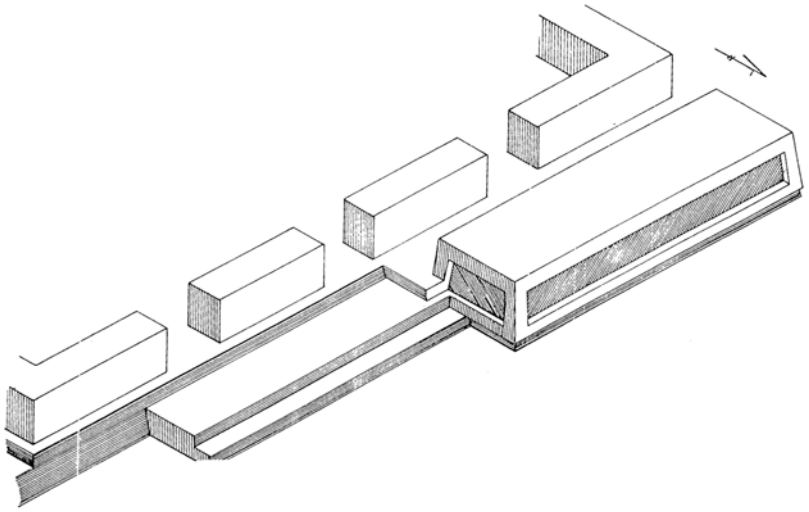


Figure 55a. Structure Sub-57, Group 6C-XVI, Tikal
(Drawing by Paulino Morales)

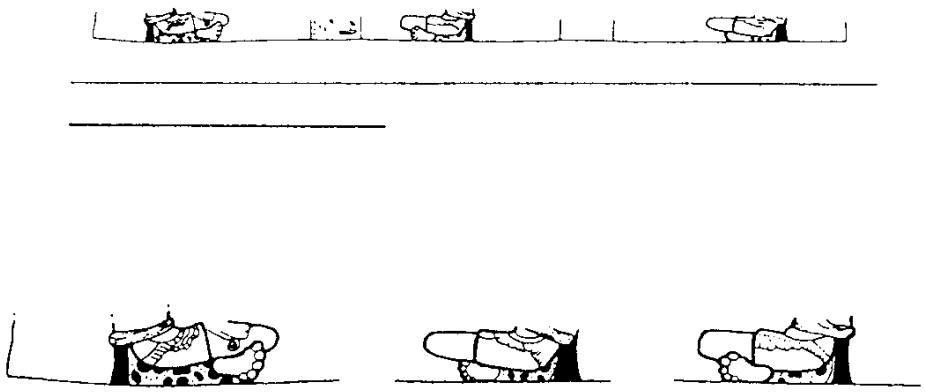


Figure 55b. Façade Sculpture, Structure Sub-57, Group 6C-XVI, Tikal

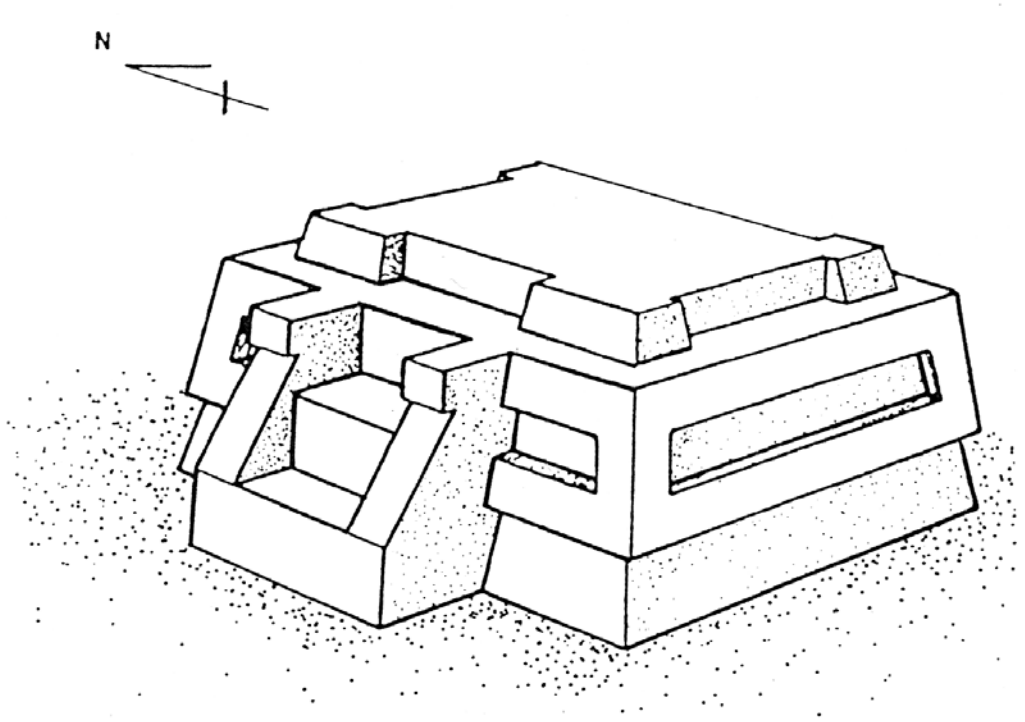


Figure 56. Structure Sub-48, Group 6C-XVI, Tikal
(Drawing by Paulino Morales)

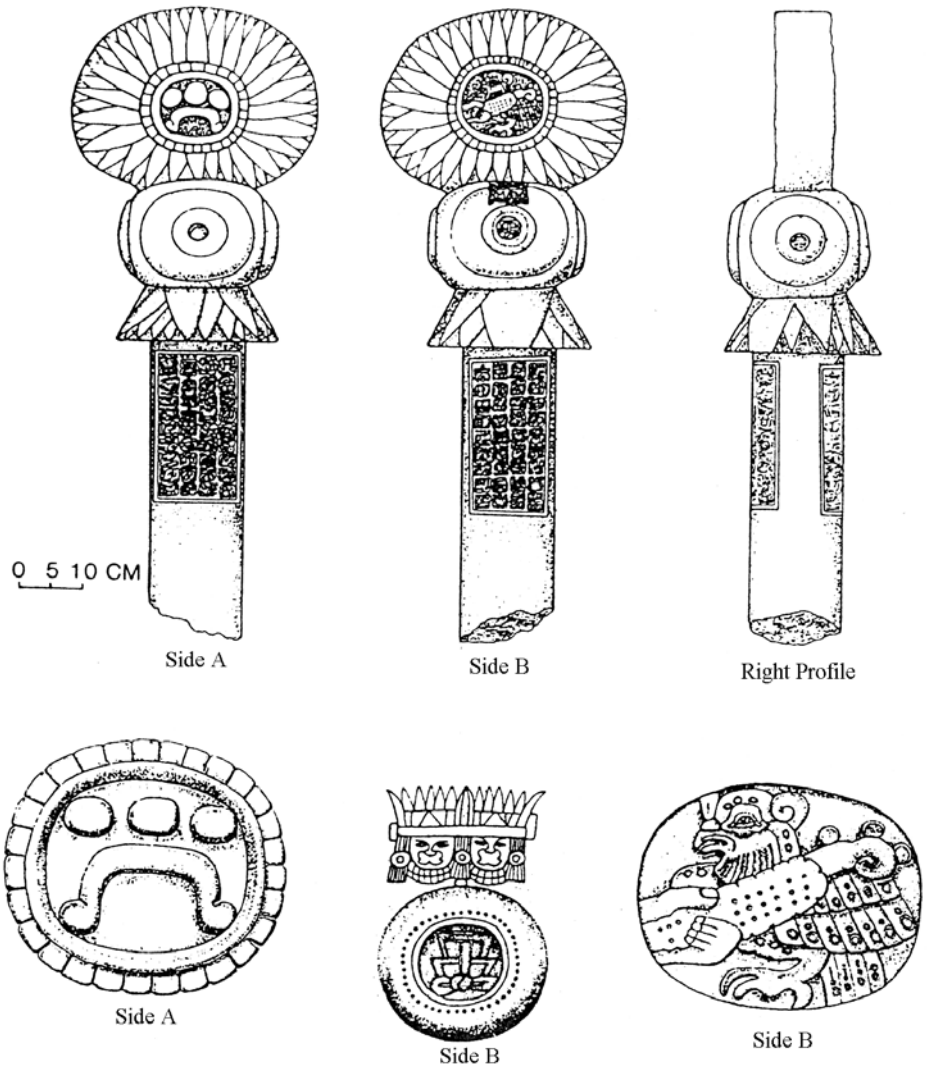


Figure 57. Marcador, Structure Sub-48, Group 6C-XVI, Tikal

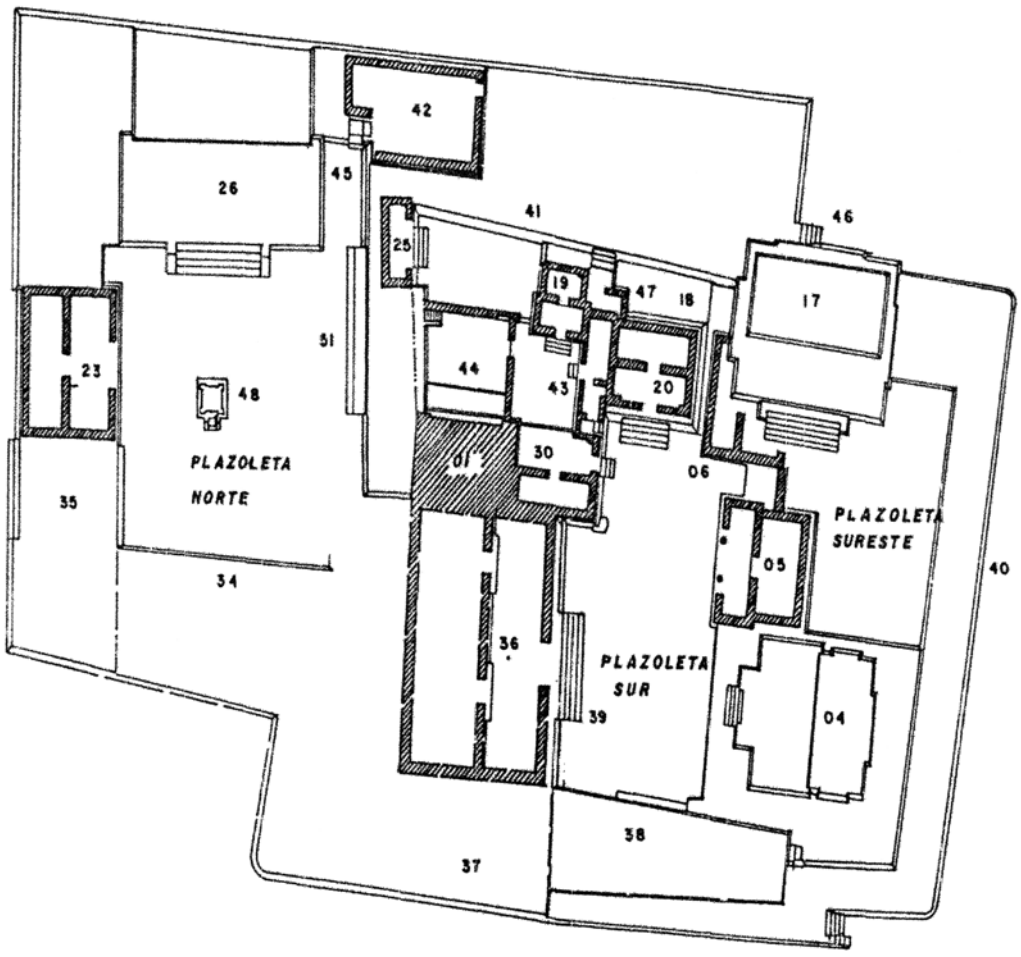


Figure 58. Plan, Group 6C-XVI, Final Phase, Tikal

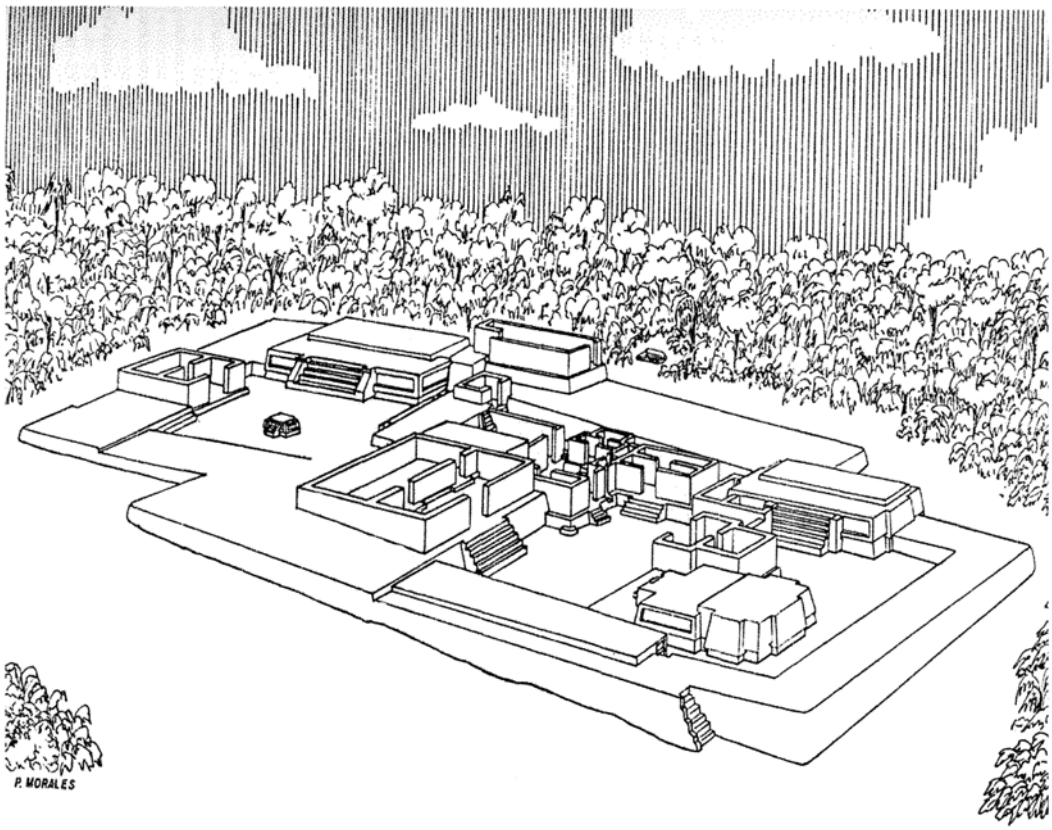


Figure 59. Reconstruction, Group 6C-XVI, Phase 8, Tikal
(Drawing by Paulino Morales)

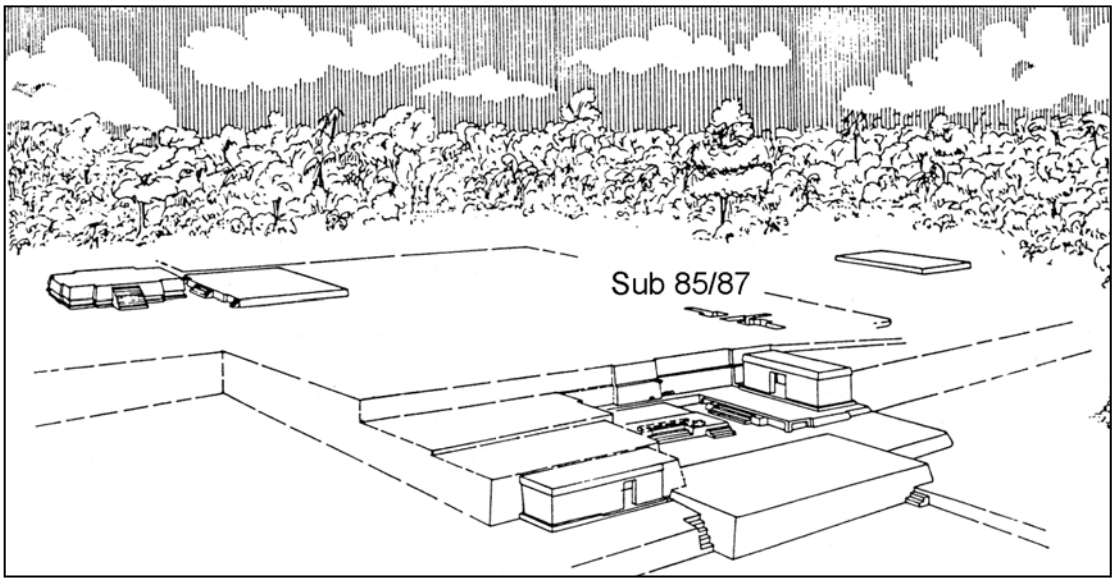


Figure 60. Reconstruction, Structure Sub-87, Group 6C-XVI, Tikal
(Drawing by Paulino Morales)

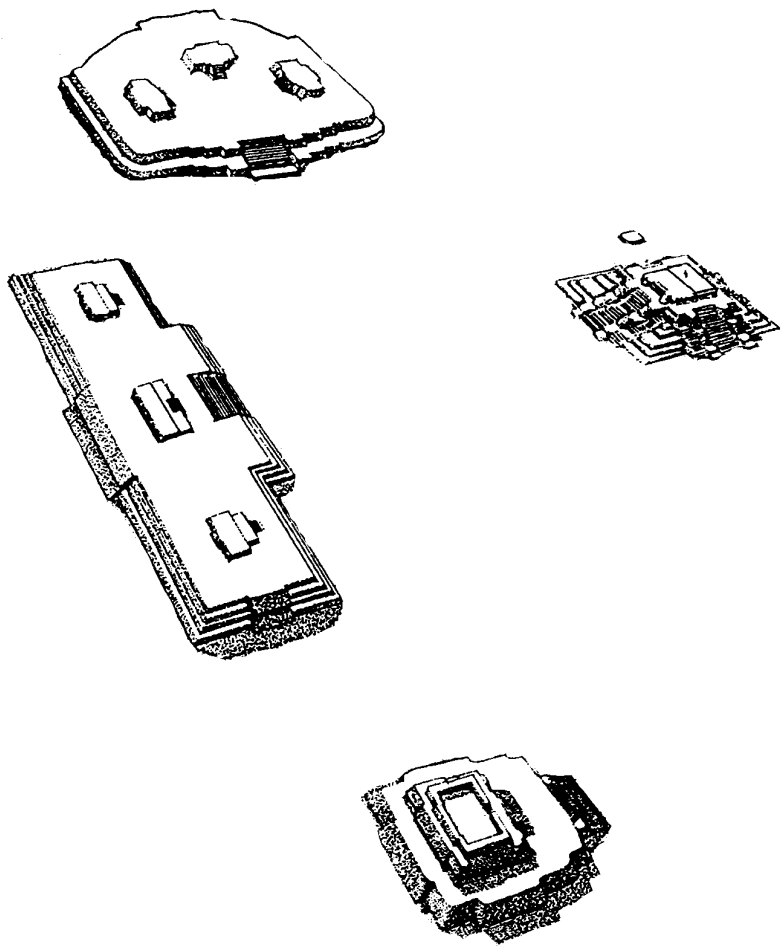


Figure 61. Reconstructed Plan, Group E, Uaxactun
(Valdes, Fahsen, and Escobedo 1999)

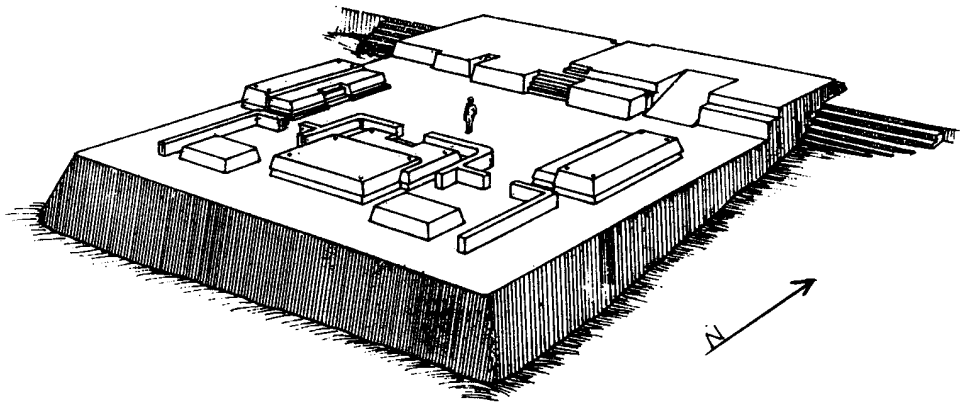


Figure 62. Plaza Hundida, Group E, Uaxactun

Figure 63. Structure E-VII-sub, Group E, Uaxactun

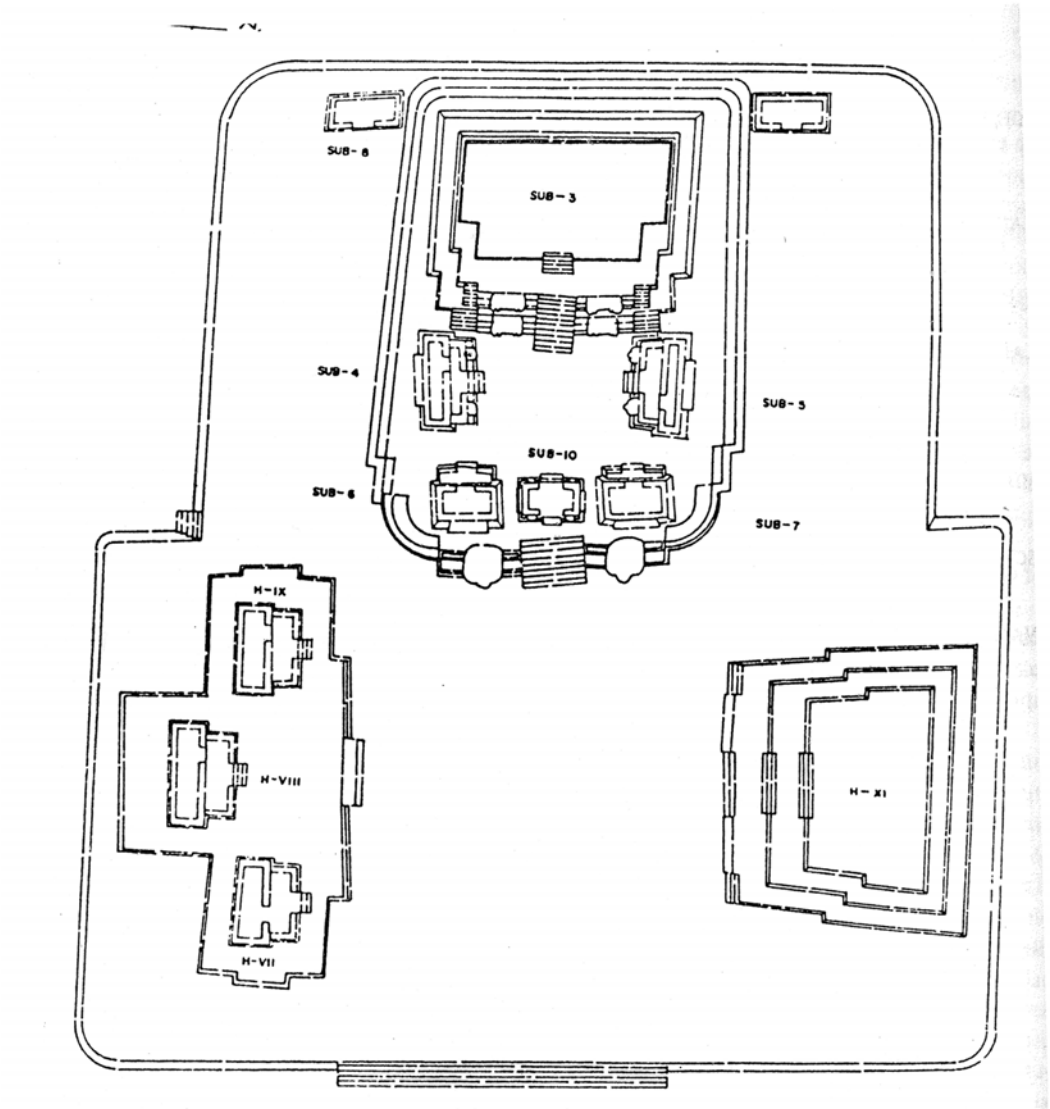


Figure 64. Plan, Group H, Phase 6, Uaxactun

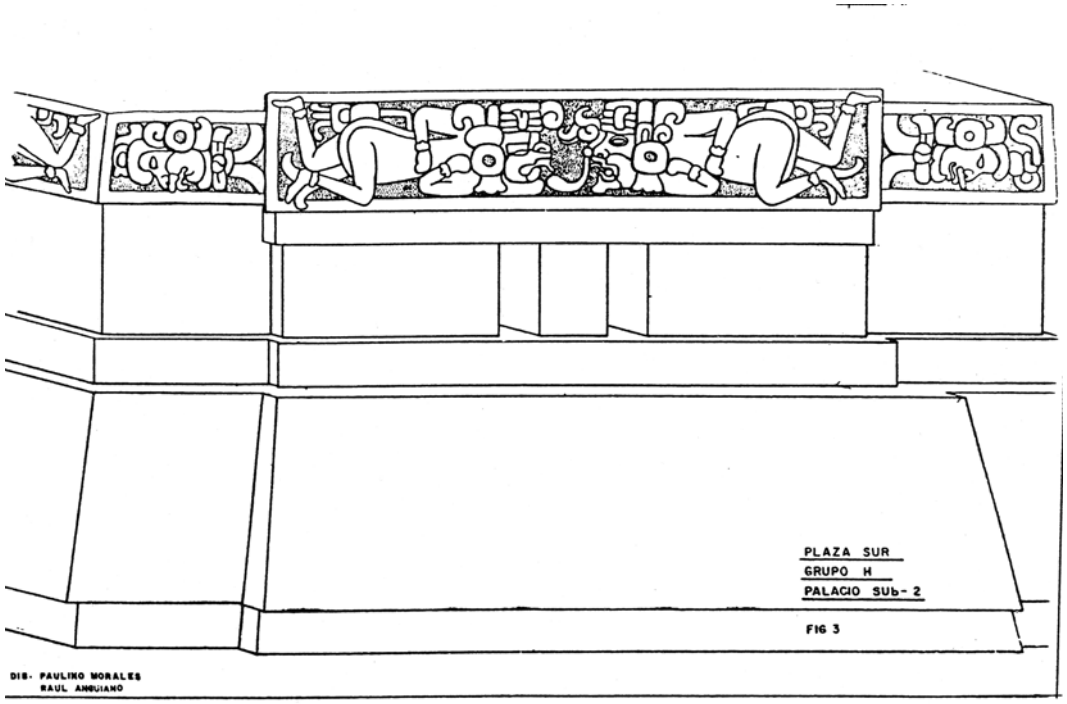


Figure 65. Façade Sculpture, Structure H-sub-2, Uaxactun
(Drawing by Paulino Morales)

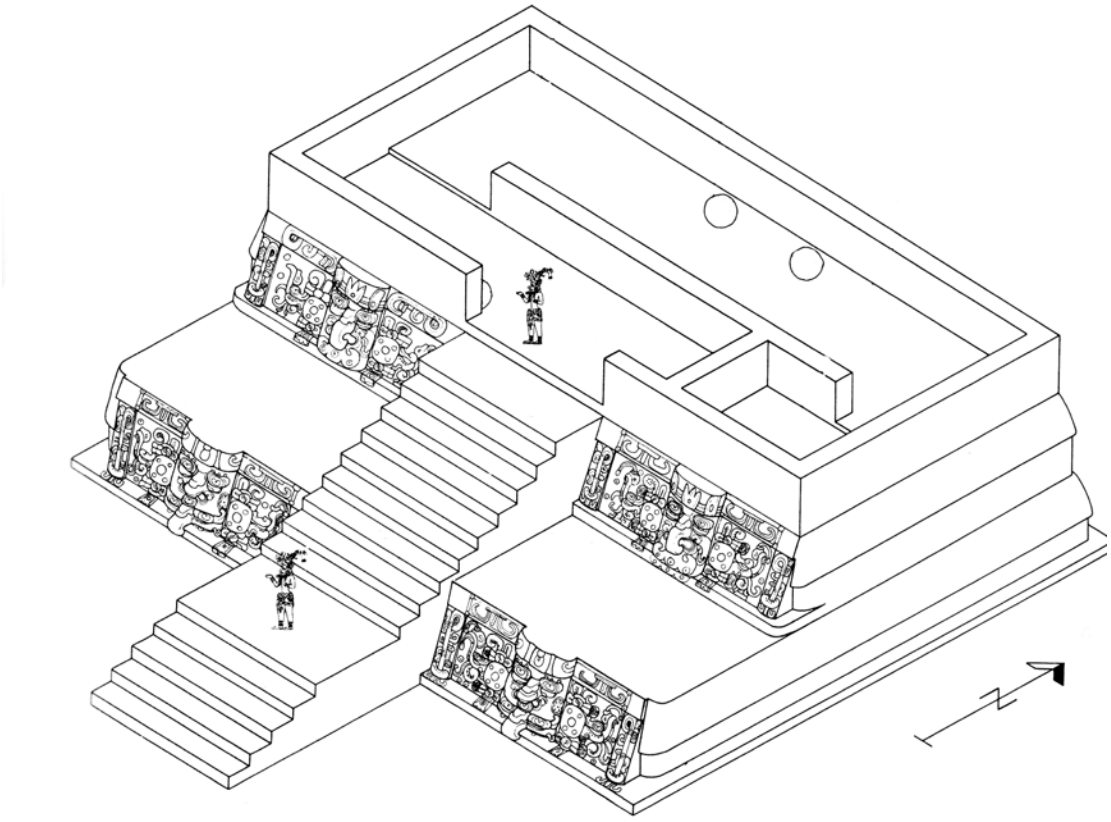


Figure 66. Reconstruction, Structure 5C-2nd, Cerros, Belize
(Drawing by Linda Schele)

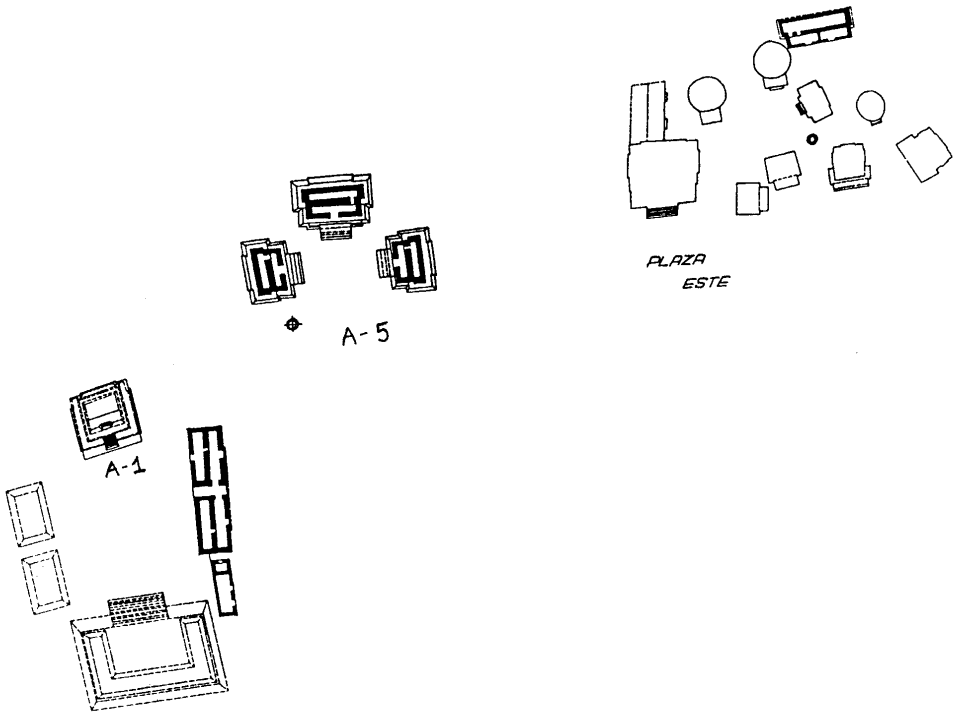


Figure 67. Plan, Group A, Uaxactun, Tzakol 2 (300-378 AD) (Valdes, Fahsen and Escobedo 1999)

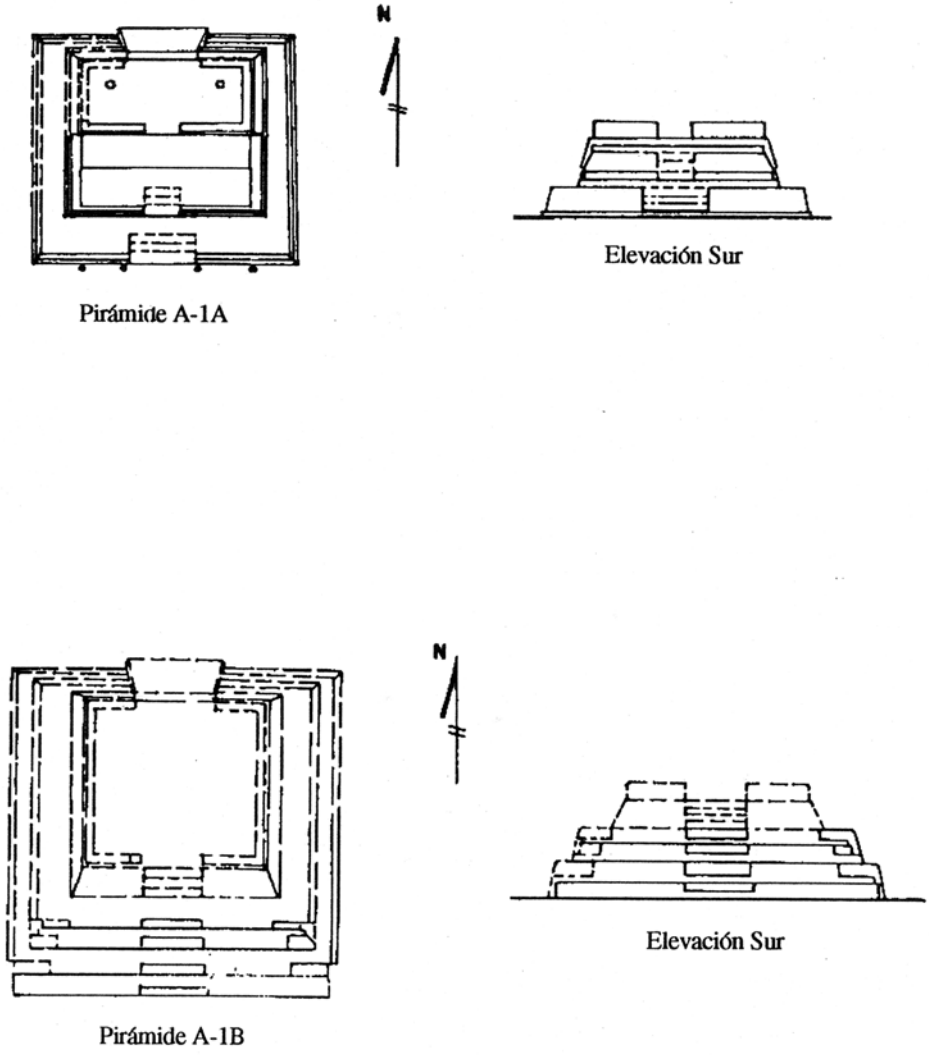


Figure 68. Structure A-I, Uaxactun
(Laporte and Valdes 1993)

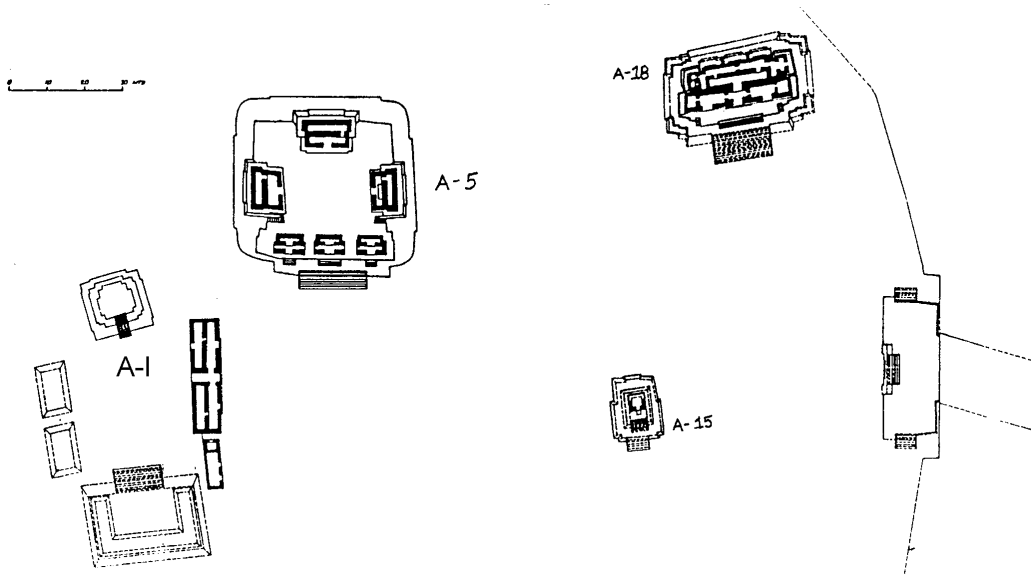


Figure 69. Plan, Group A, Uaxactun, Tzakol 3 (378-550 AD) (Valdes, Fahsen and Escobedo 1999)

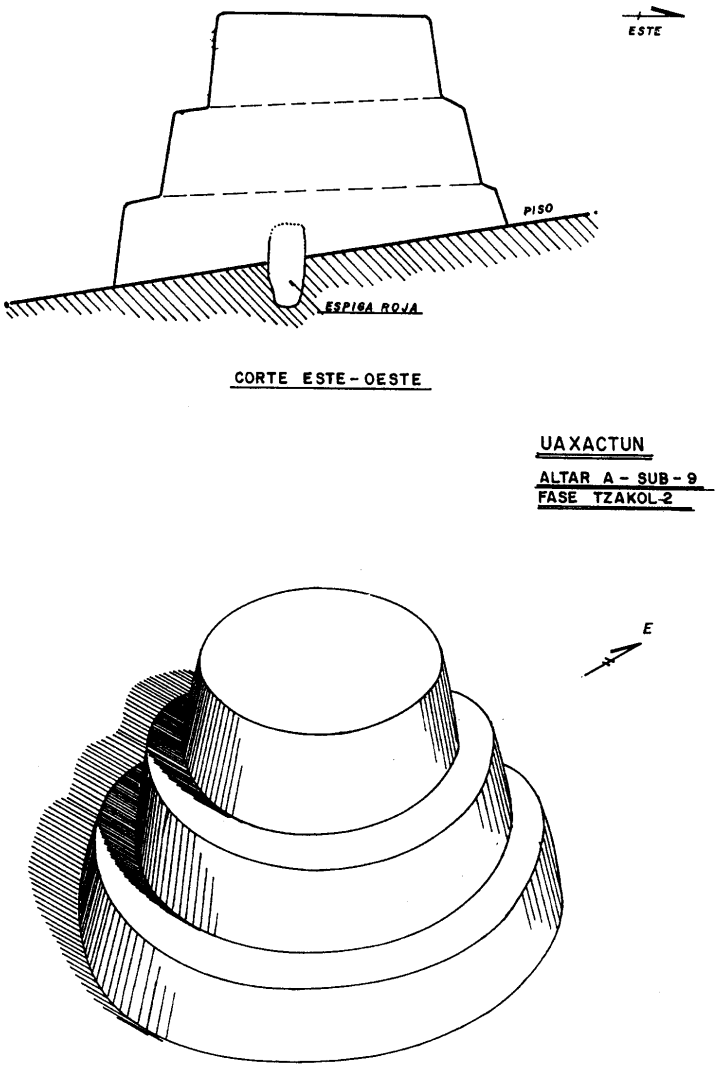


Figure 70. “Ballgame Markers”, East Plaza, Group A, Uaxactun

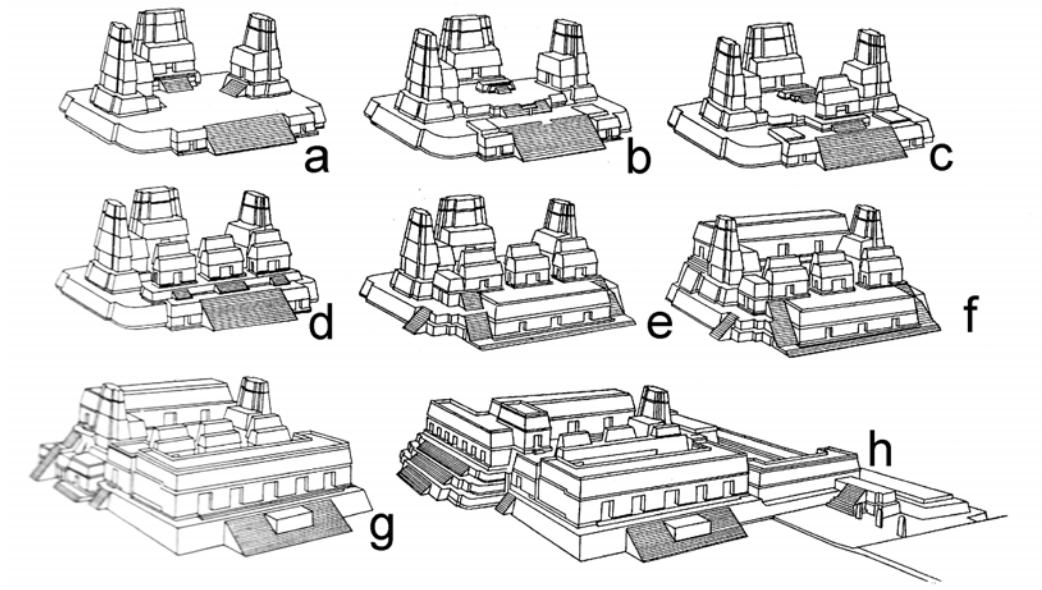


Figure 71. Construction Phases, Structure A-V, Uaxactun

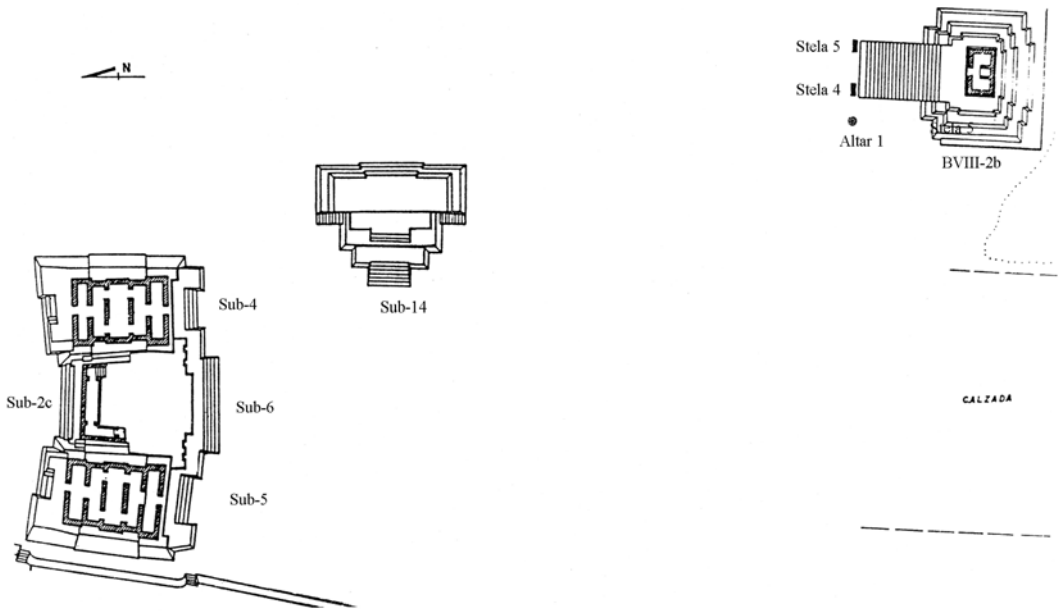
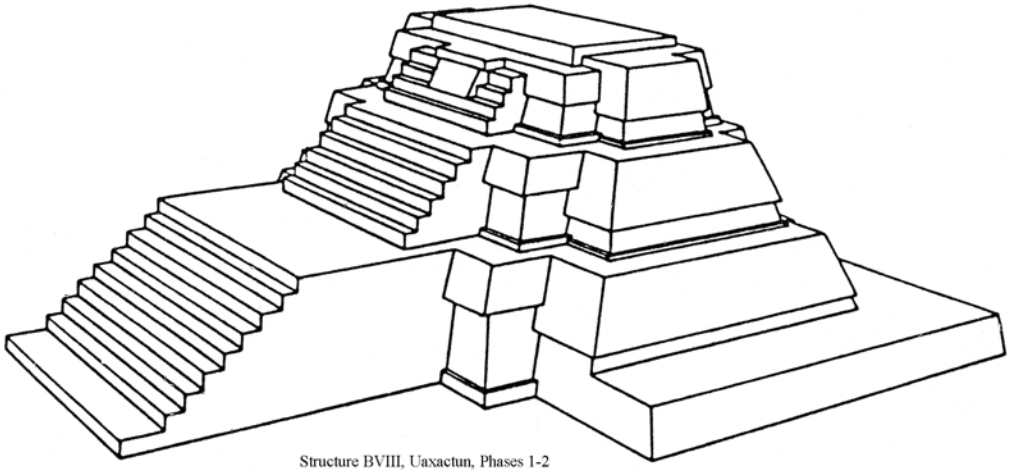


Figure 72. Plan, Group B, Uaxactun (Laporte 1989)



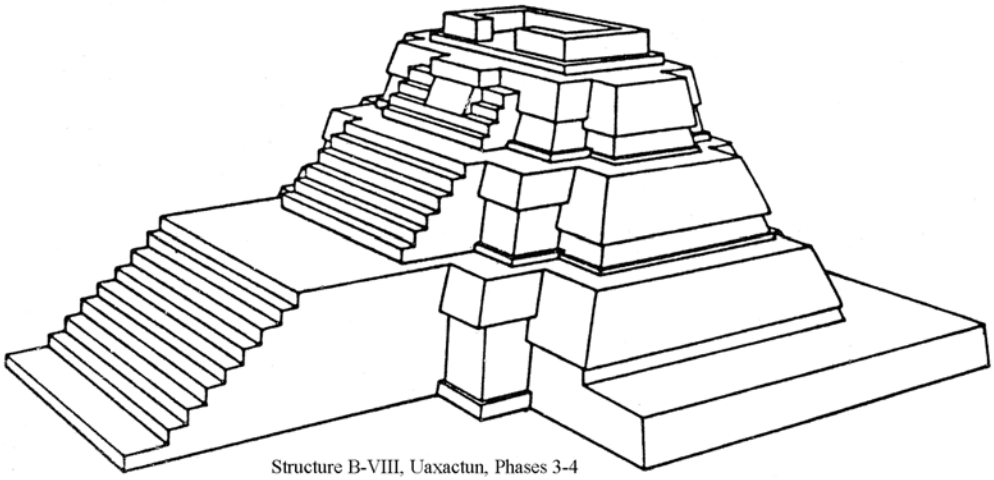


Figure 73. Reconstruction, Structure B-VIII, Uaxactun
(Drawing by E. Ortega)

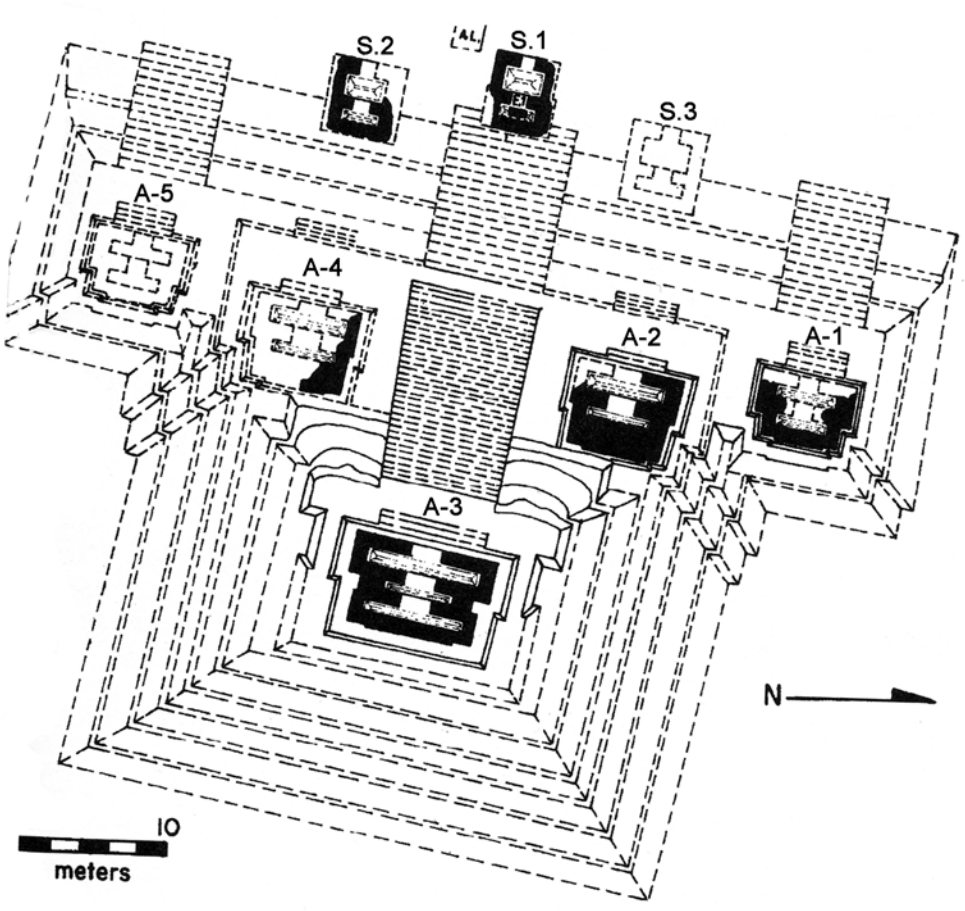


Figure 74. Plan, Structure A-3, Rio Azul
(Plan by Miguel Orrego Corzo)

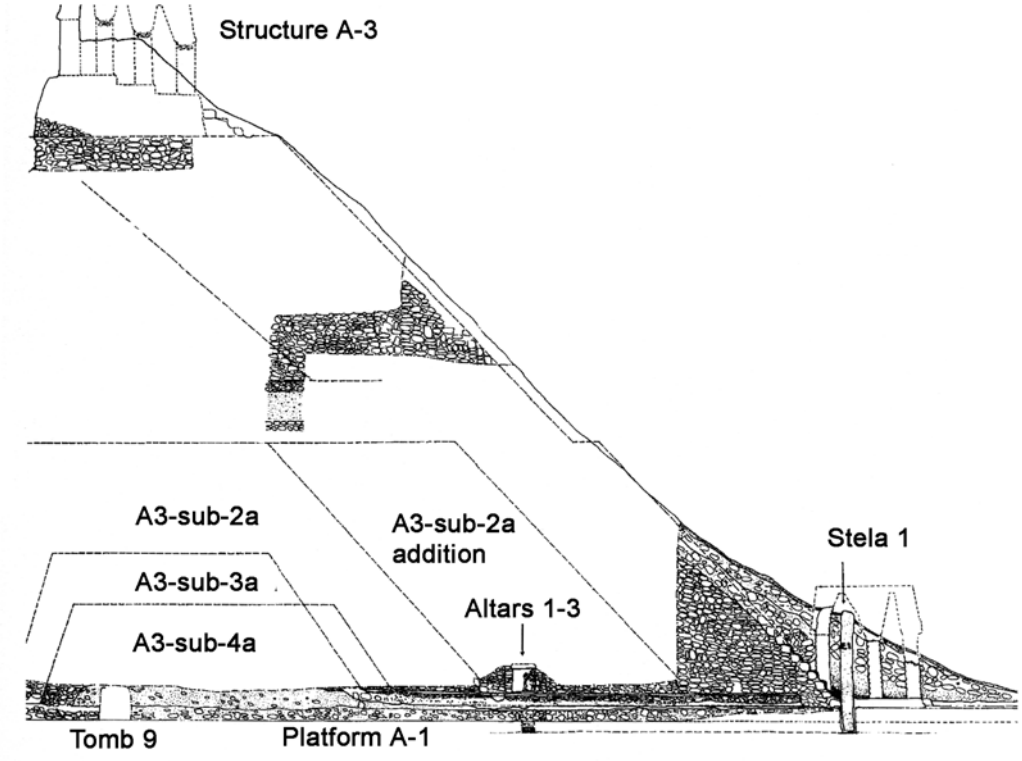


Figure 75. Cross-section, Structure A-3, Rio Azul
(Drawing by Miguel Orrego Corzo)

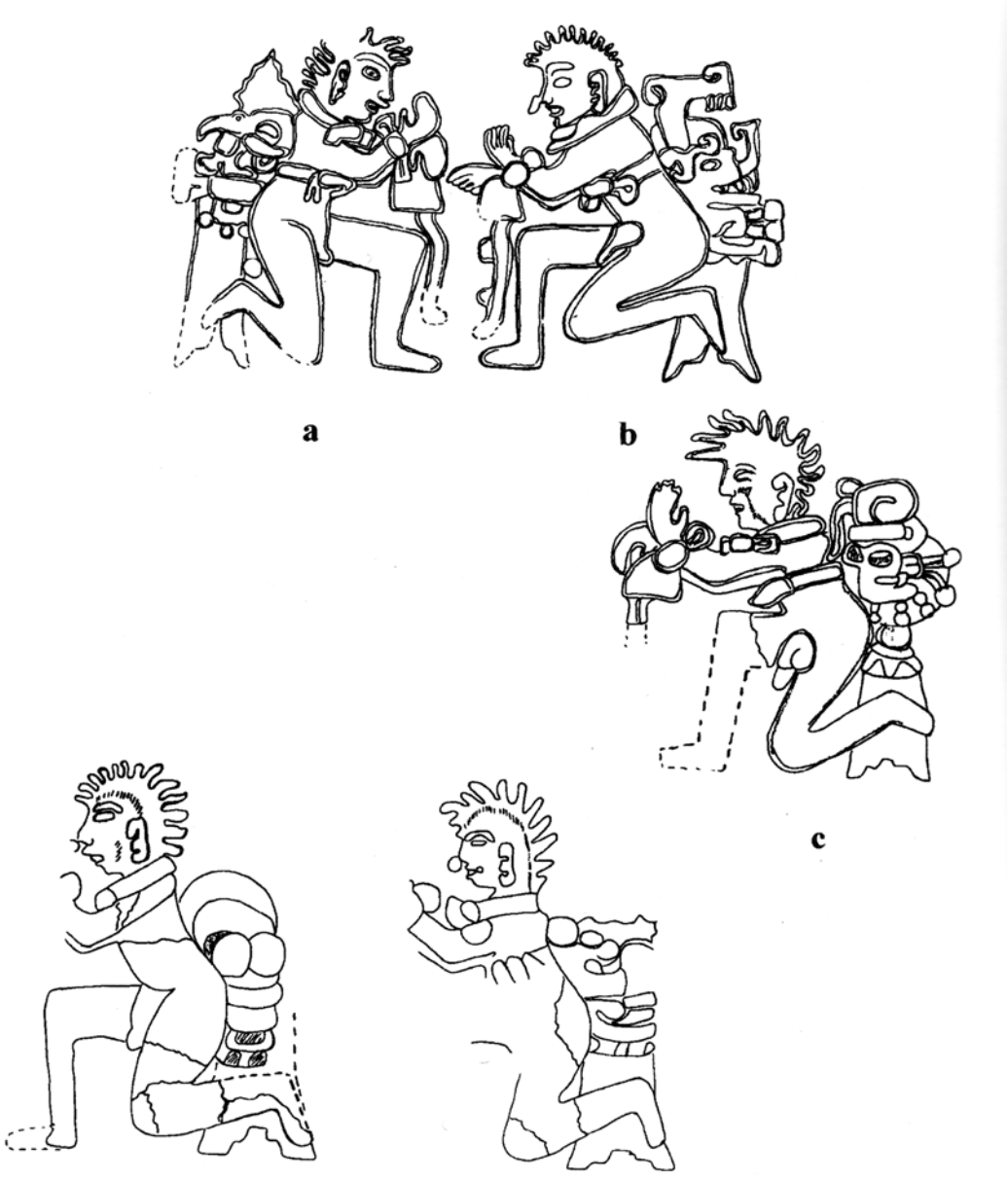


Figure 76. Altars 1-3, Rio Azul
(Drawing by Miguel Orrego Corzo)

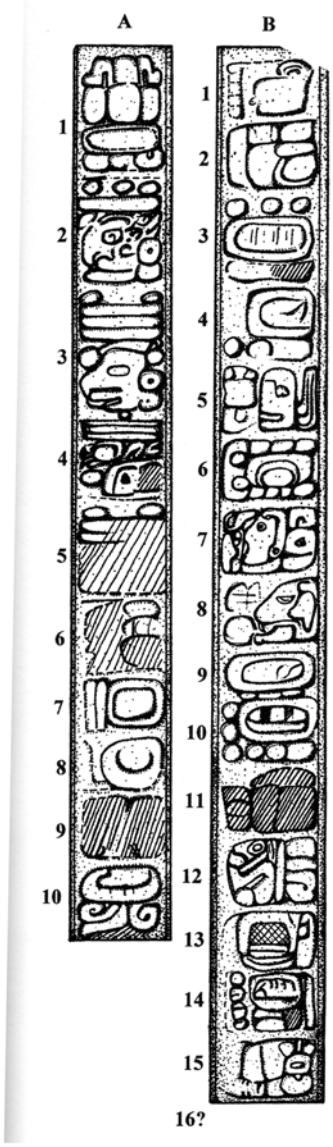


Figure 77. Stela 1 text, Rio Azul
(Drawing by R.E.W. Adams and Cathy Dodt Ellis)

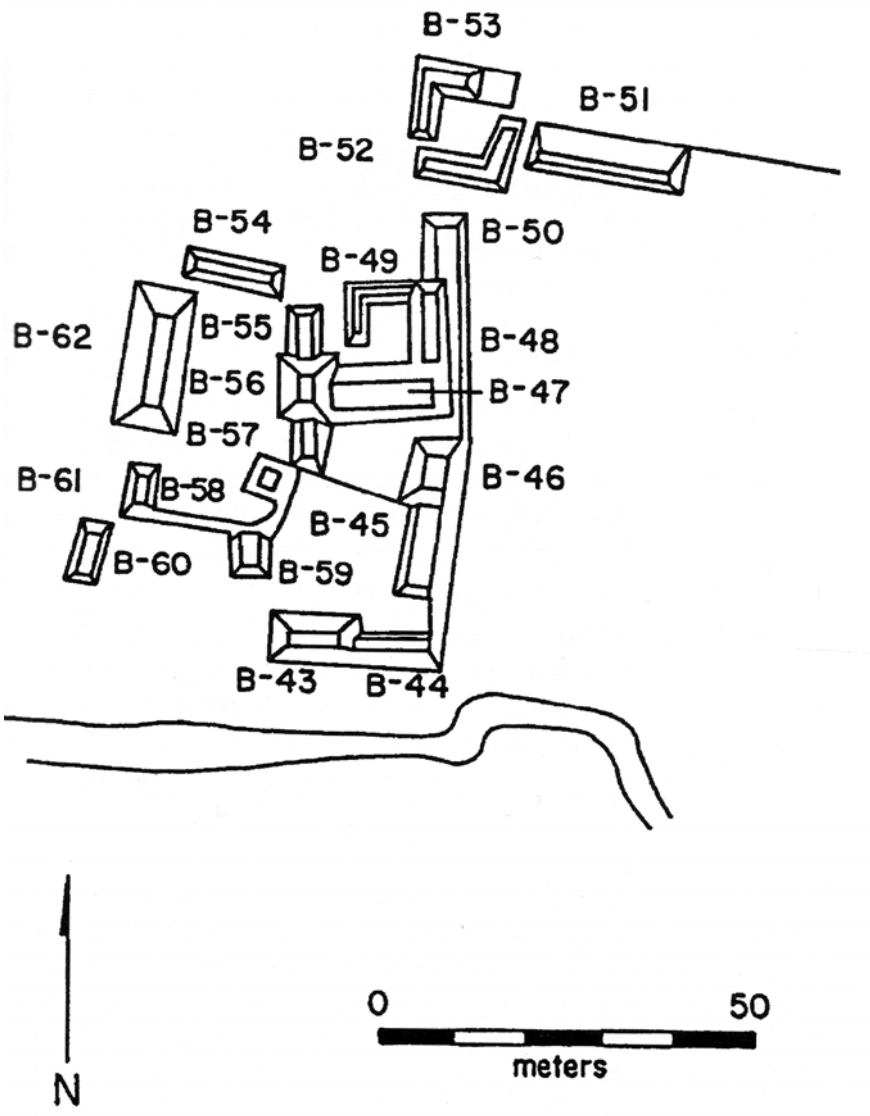


Figure 78. Plan, Group B-56, Rio Azul
(Plan by W. Bruce Ellis)

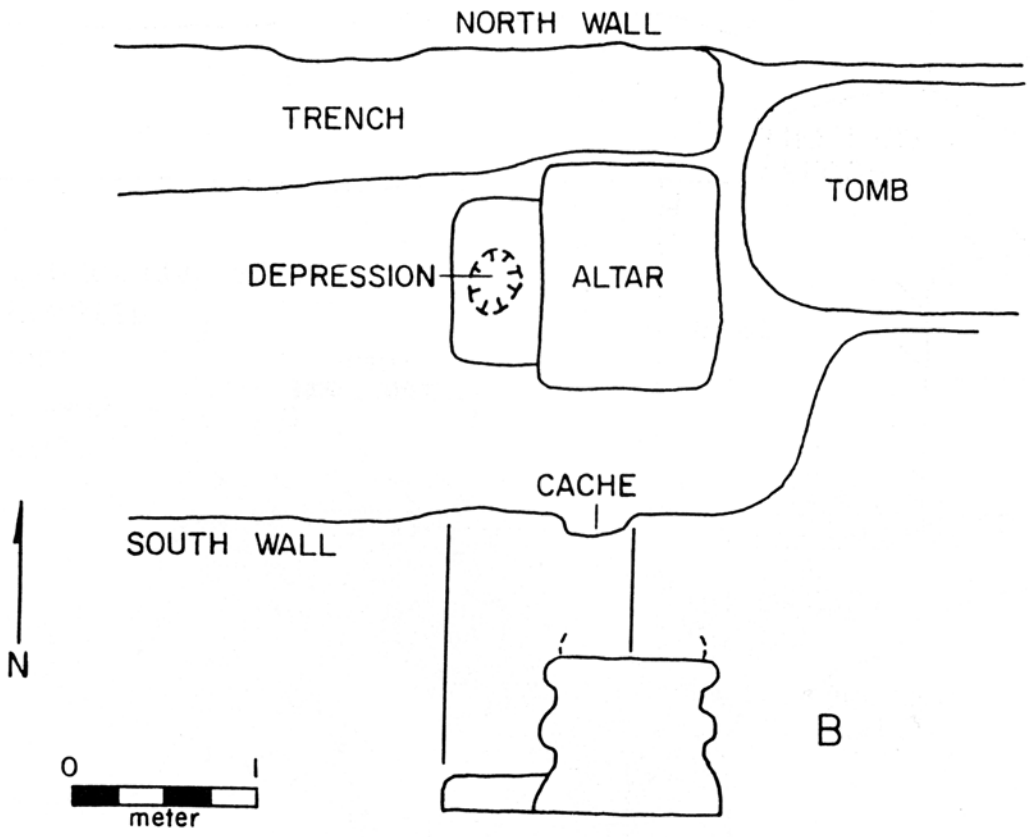


Figure 79. Cross-section, Platform in Group B-56, Rio Azul

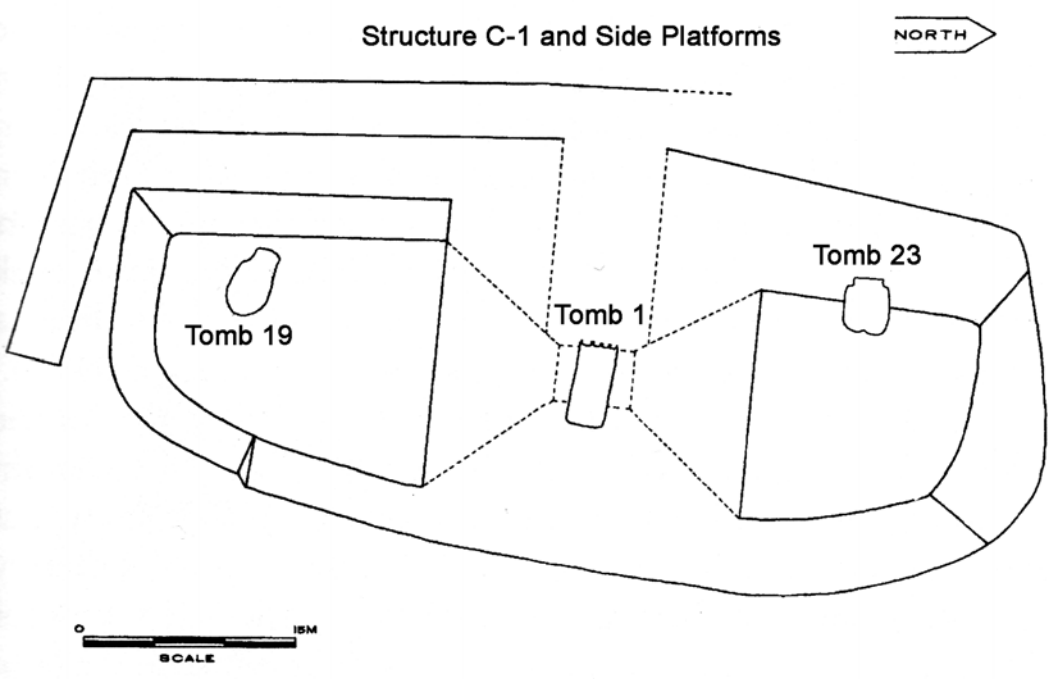


Figure 80. Plan, Group C-1, Tombs 1, 19 and 23, Rio Azul
(Plan by G.D. Hall)

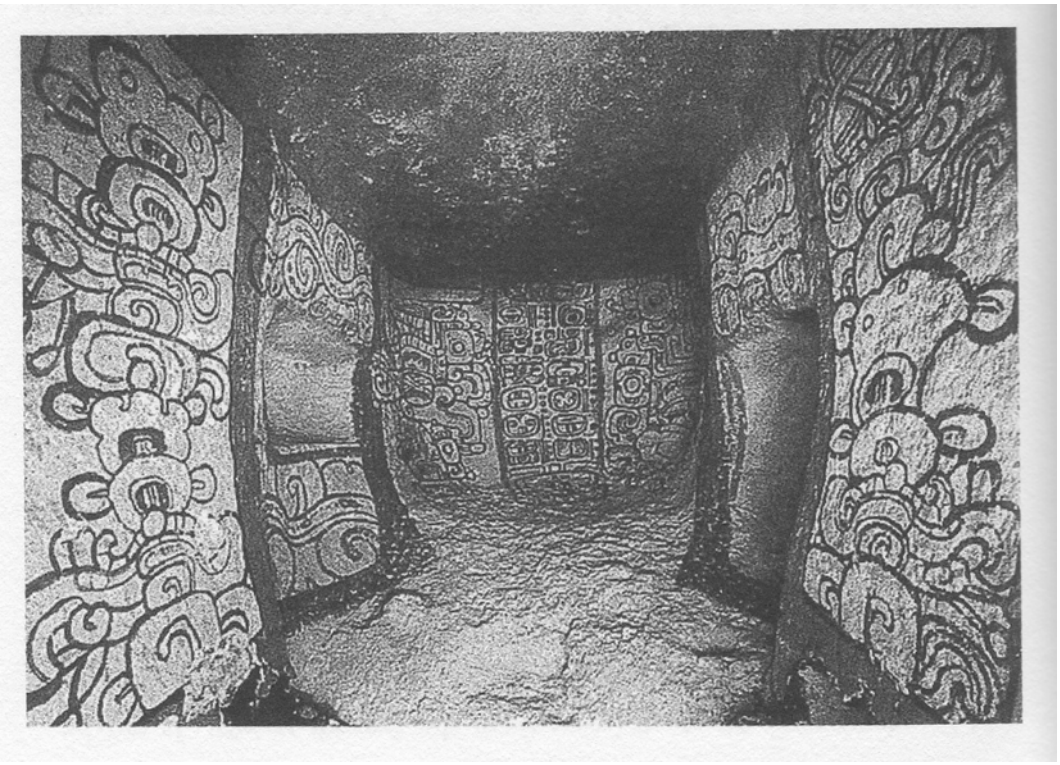


Figure 81. Murals, Tomb 1, Rio Azul

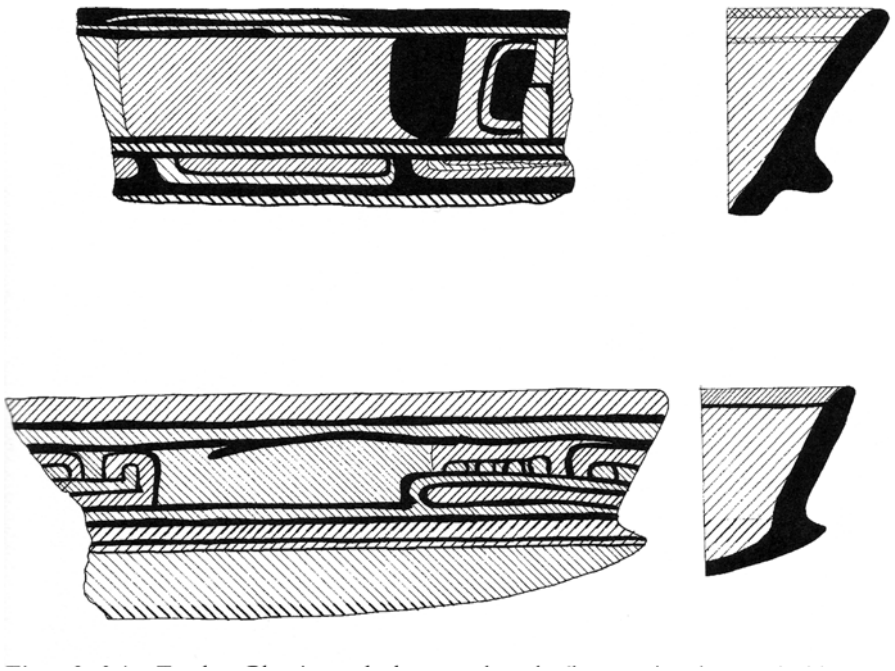


Figure 82. Basal-Flange and Cylinder Tripod Vessels, Tombs 19 and 23, Rio Azul (Drawing by Leonel Alvarado)

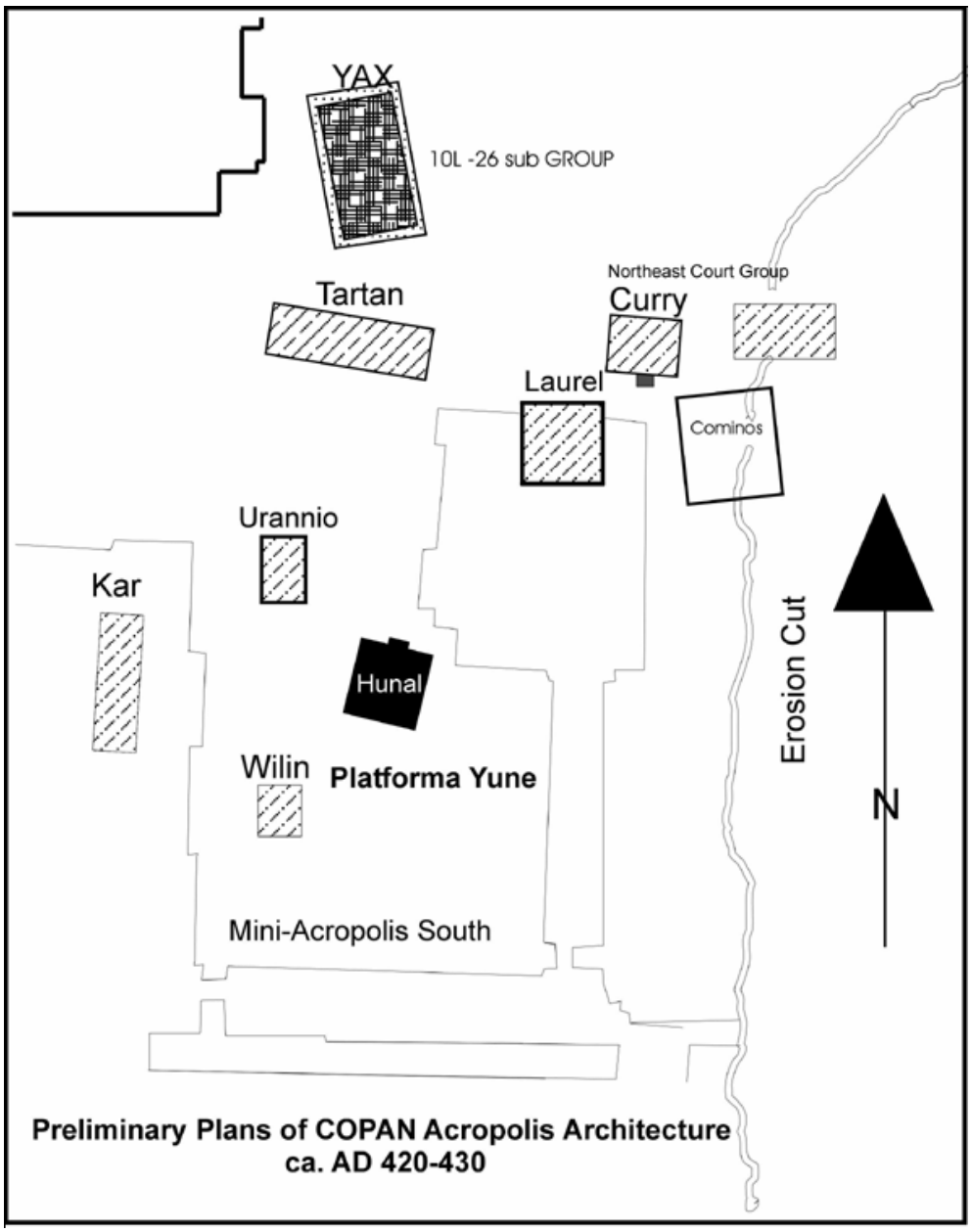


Figure 83. Plan, Mini-Acropolis (c.420-430 AD), Copan
(Computer-assisted map by Loa Traxler, ECAP)

Figure 84. Hunal Tomb, Copan

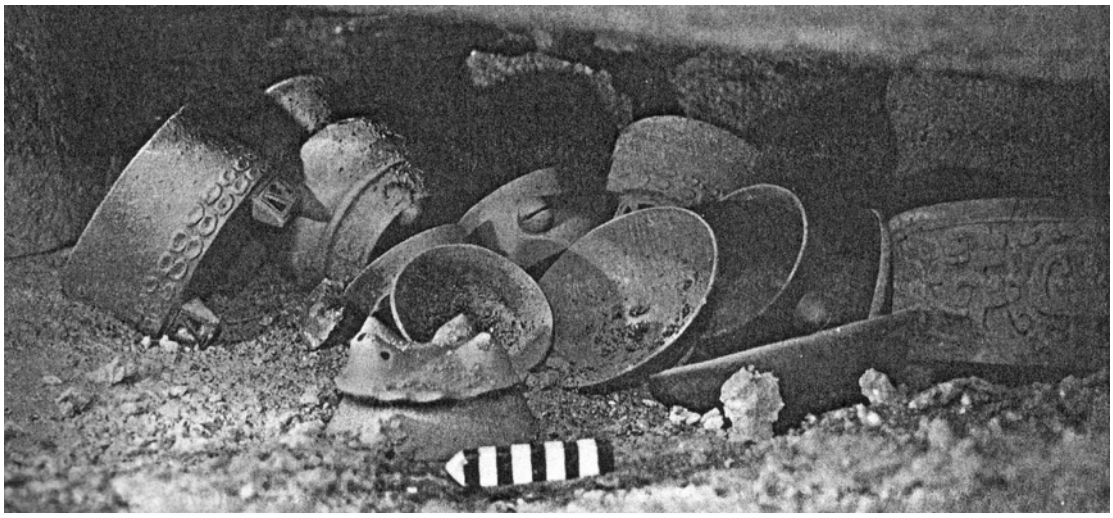


Figure 85. Ceramics, Hunal Tomb, Copan

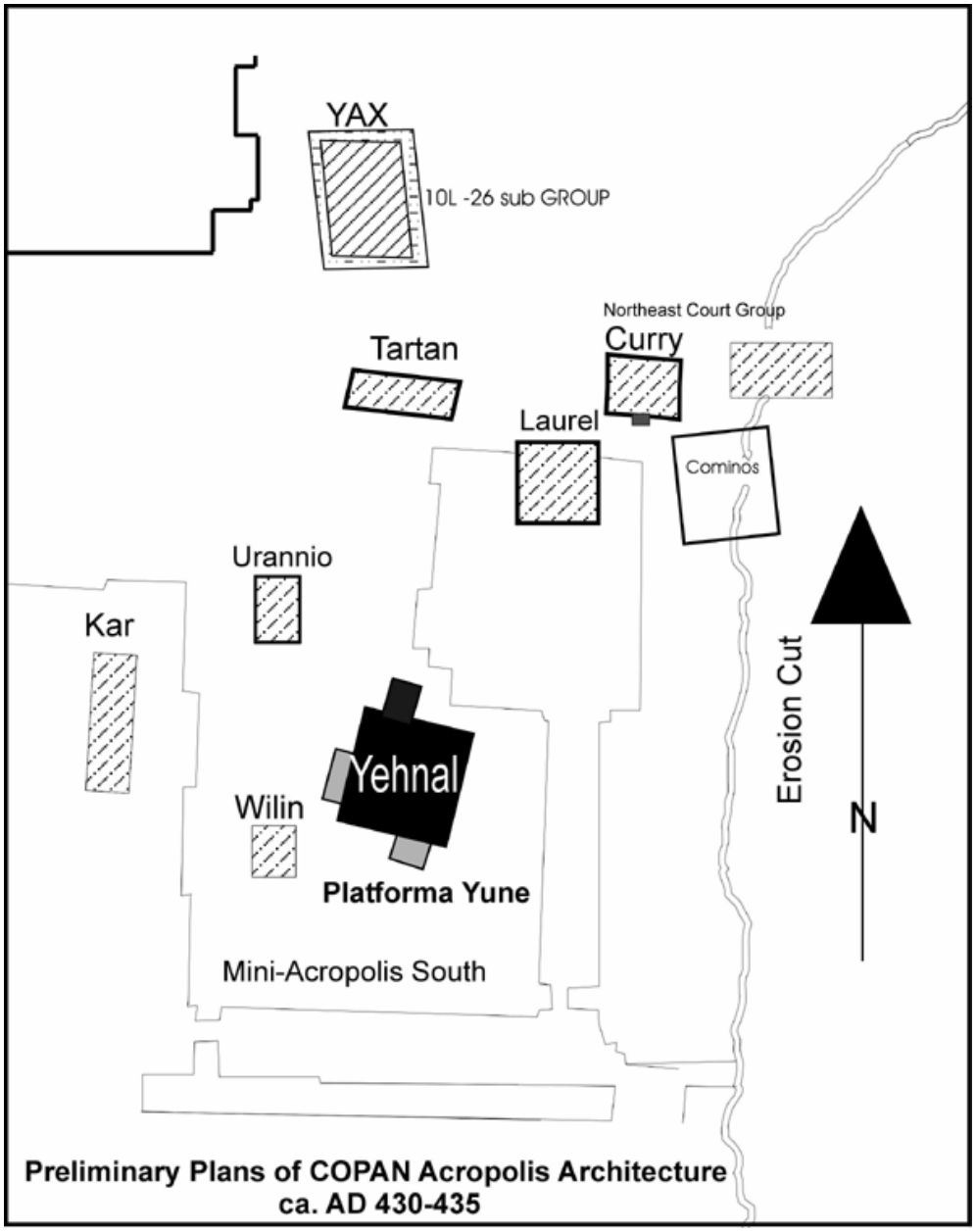


Figure 86. Plan of Acropolis (c. 430-435 AD), Copan
(Computer-assisted map by Loa Traxler, ECAP)

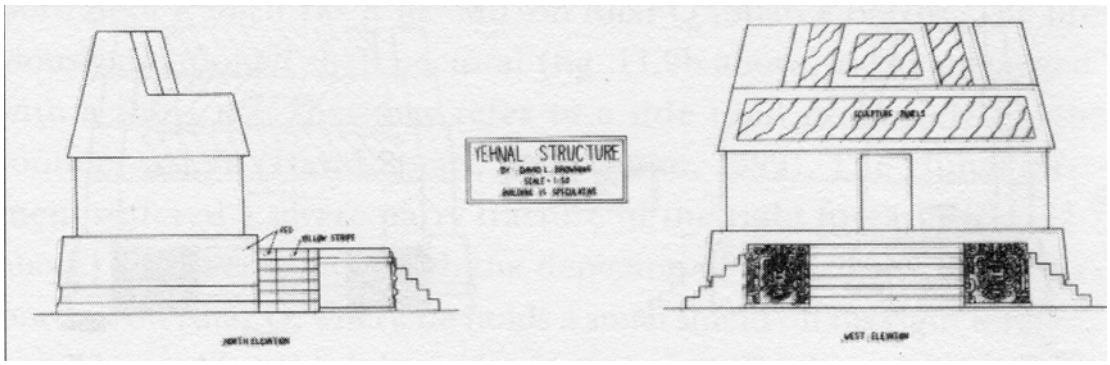


Figure 87. Reconstruction, Yehnal Structure, Copan
(Drawing by David Browning)

Figure 88. Façade Sculpture, Yehnal Structure, Copan

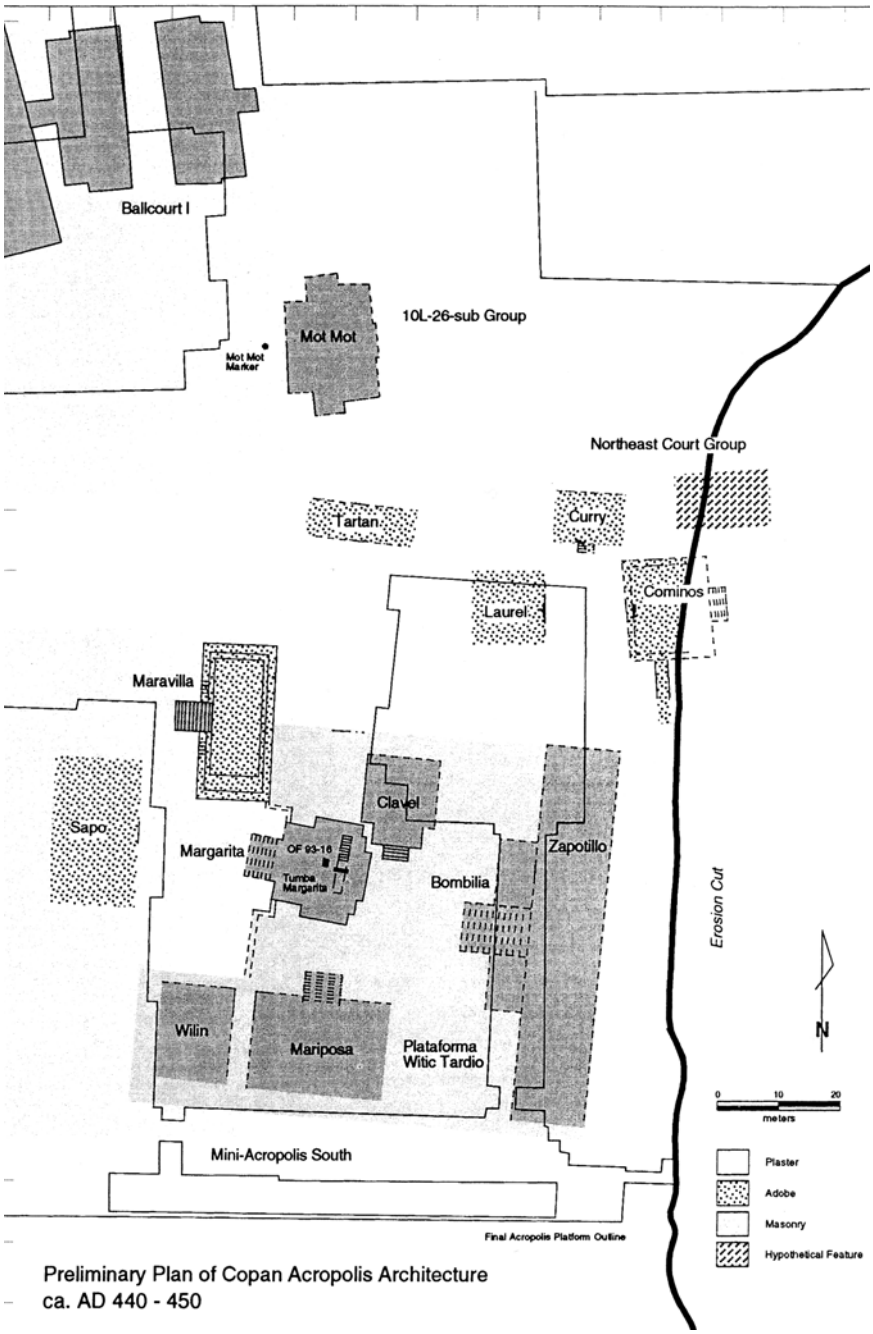


Figure 89. Plan, Acropolis (c. 440-450 AD), Copan
(Computer-assisted map by Loa Traxler, ECAP)

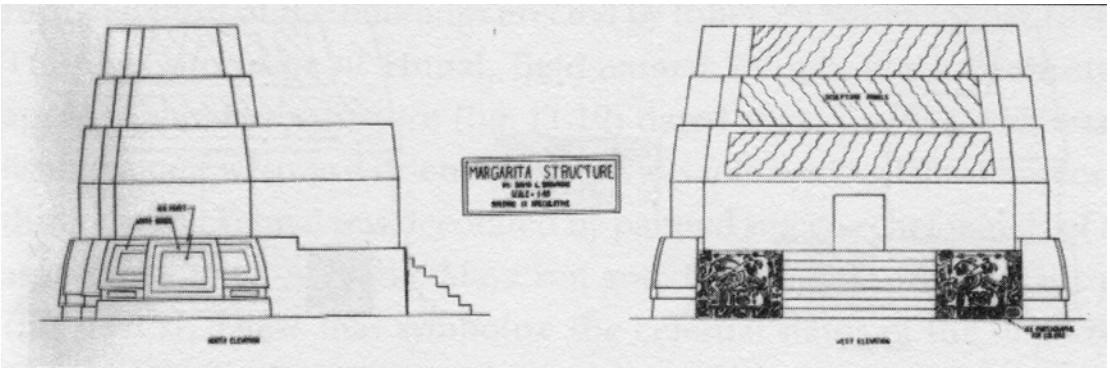


Figure 90. Reconstruction, Margarita Structure, Copan
(Drawing by David Browning)

Figure 91. Façade Sculpture, Margarita Structure, Copan

Figure 92. The “Dazzler”, Margarita Tomb, Copan

Figure 93. Drawing, Mirror back, Margarita Tomb, Copan

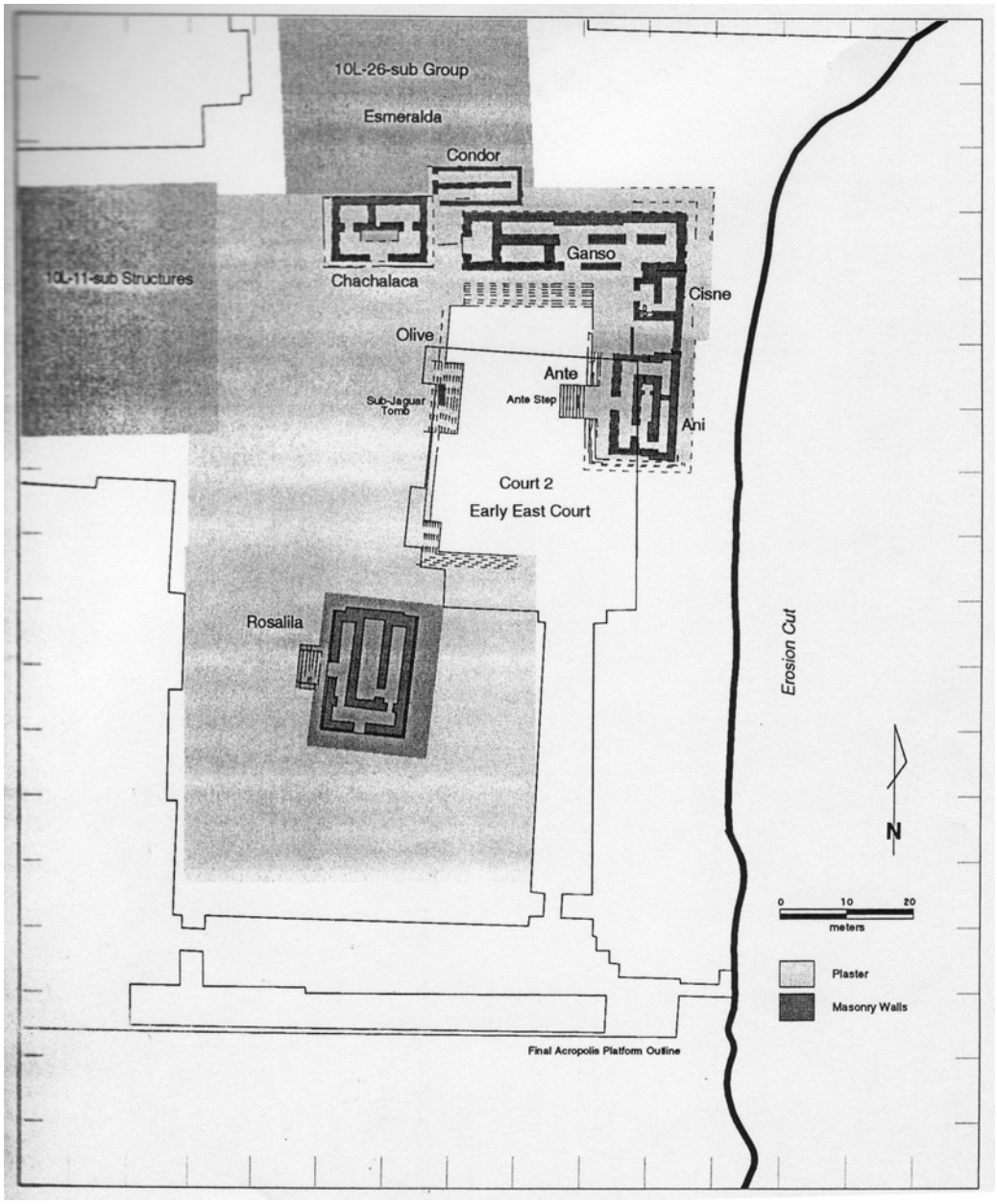


Figure 94. Plan, Acropolis (c. 540-650 AD), Copan
(Computer-assisted map by Loa Traxler, ECAP)

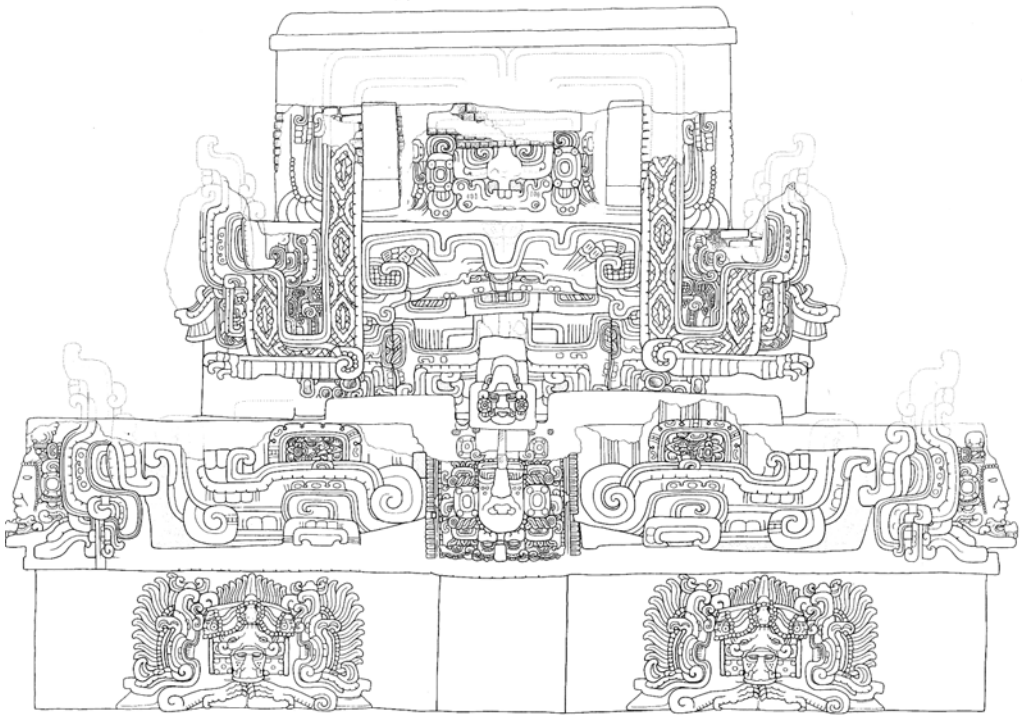


Figure 95. Rosalila Structure, Copan
(Drawing by Barbara Fash)

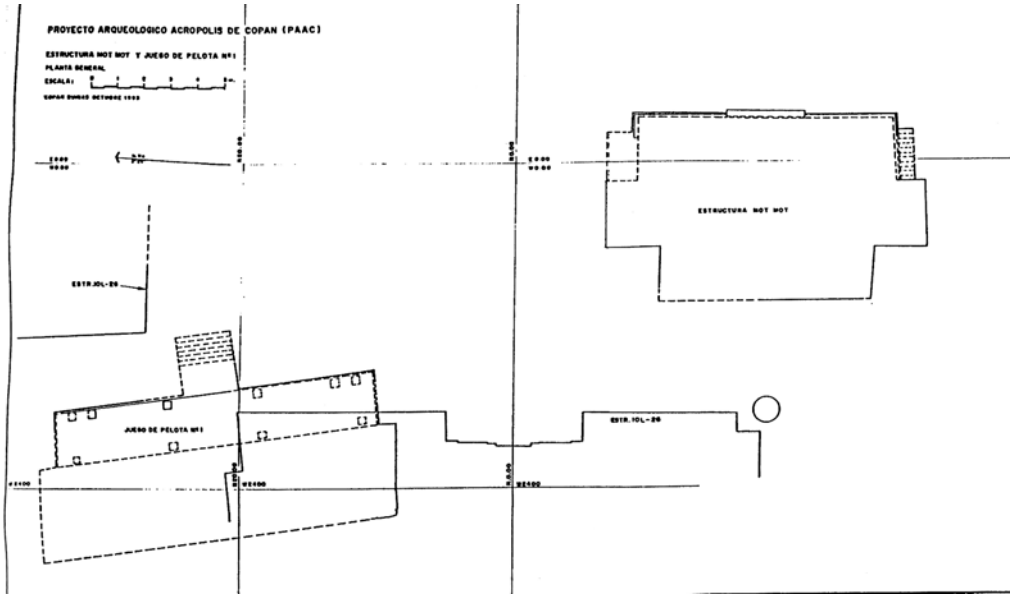


Figure 96. Plan, Motmot Structure, Copan

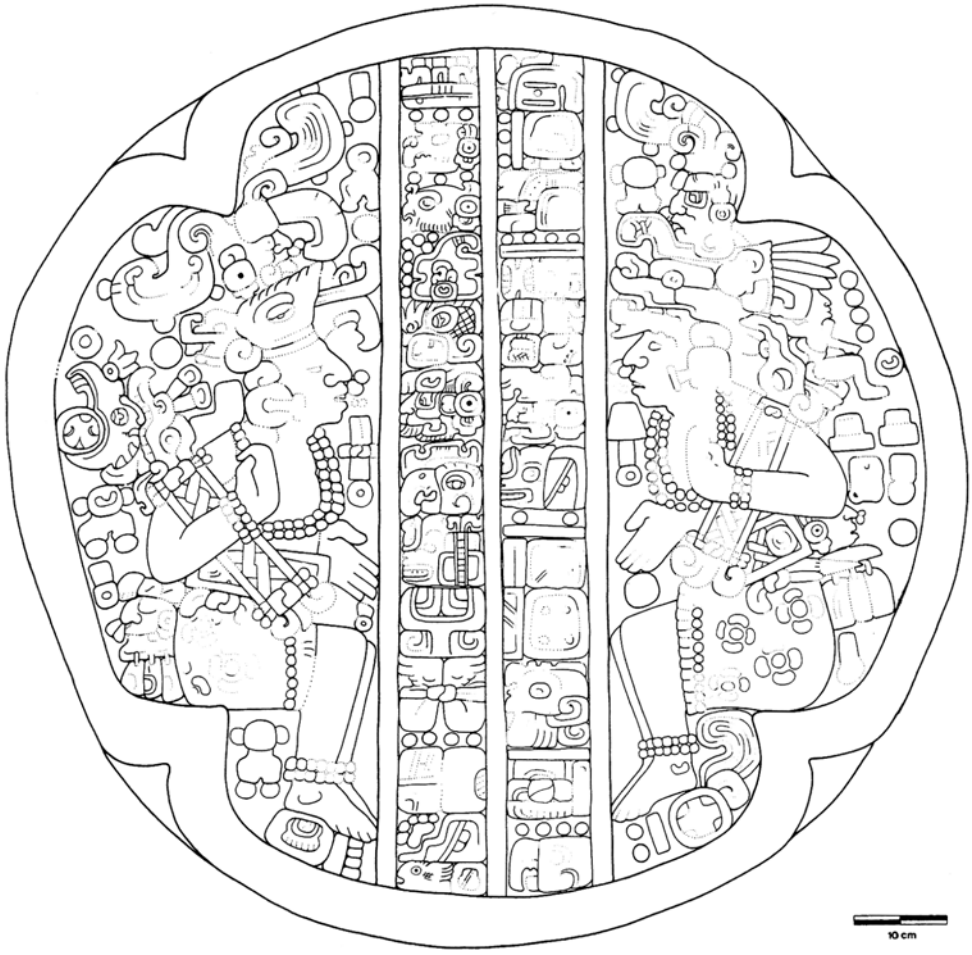


Figure 97. Motmot Stone, Copan
(Drawing by Barbara Fash)

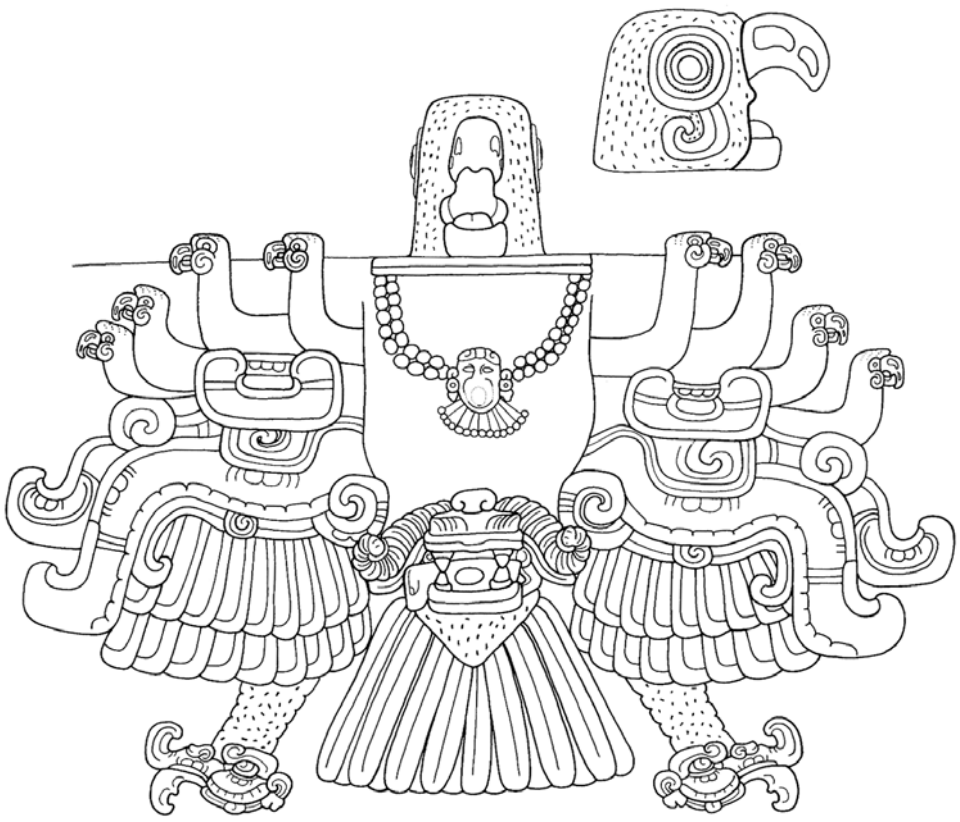


Figure 98. Ballcourt I, Stucco Sculpture, Copan
(Drawing by Barbara Fash)

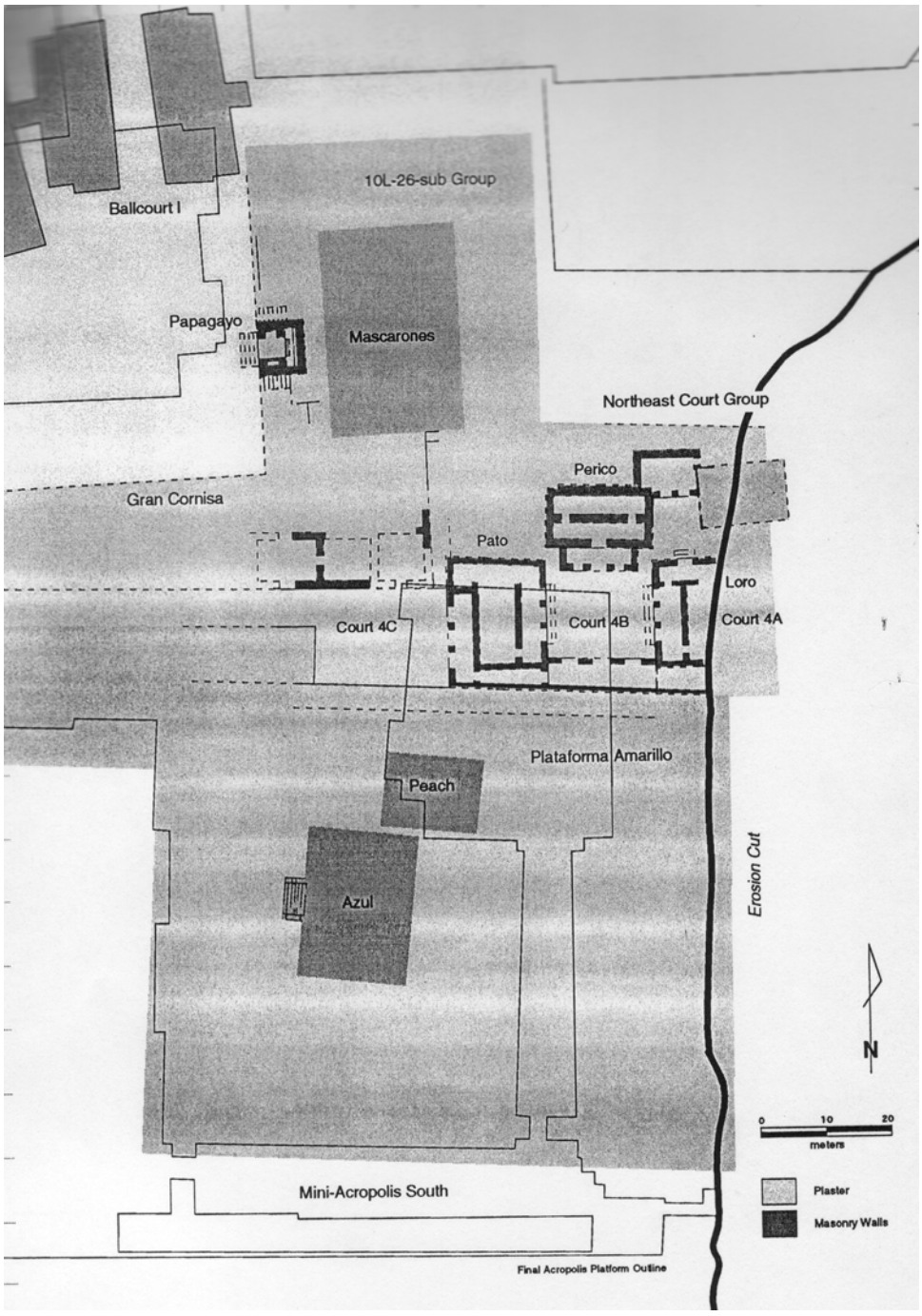


Figure 99. Plan, Acropolis (c.500-540 AD), Copan
(Computer-assisted map by Loa Traxler, ECAP)

Figure 100. Faneuil Hall, Boston, Massachusetts, Charles Bulfinch, architect, 1805

Figure 101. Parthenon, Athens, Greece, 5th century BC

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